

Ballroom Dancing

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Ballroom Dancing

by Anonymous

Summary

According to Tony Stark, the future will be unrecognizable, but Stark's utopia feels years away. In fact, it's hard to imagine the next day, let alone the future. Peter never expected his future to occur on the Odin estate, a grand manor settled in the English countryside. Nor could he have ever predicted the unpredictability of Odin's son, Loki.

From forbidden romances to family mysteries, Peter is knee deep in matters that shouldn't concern him. Loki's arranged marriage to Tony Stark is shaky at best, especially when the man seems far more interested in Peter. And yet they say that after a fire, a Phoenix may rise from the ashes.

Numb

Chapter Notes

So I'm pretty excited about this fic. I think it's going to be a long one with a lot of character development and changes. Loki starts out... pretty awful, but you'll find that there's more to him than meets the eye. I have a lot of plans for this fic so I hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*I feel numb most of the time
Lower I get the higher
I'll climb, and I will wonder why
I got dark only to shine*

Springtime is nearly always beautiful in Oxford. The trees all blooming with pinks and whites, and birds fill the air with songs no less beautiful than a choir. This spring, however, marked an unpleasant occasion for Peter, as this spring it wasn't only the trees who would be blooming.

He'd seen other omegas lined up in the courtyard, of course. Every spring he watched from his window as the omegas were put in their Sunday best and chosen by alphas. It was always such an aesthetic process, and everything would have been wonderful if it wasn't for the whispered horror stories about what omegas were being brought home to. And so, when it came time for Peter to don a sky blue suit and have his hair curled into a little quiff, he found himself trembling slightly. He was reassured, of course, and told that he was beautiful and would attract a good, kind alpha, but sometimes Peter wondered if any alphas were truly kind.

That morning had been a flurry of activity, full of hair, make up, and a light breakfast. But now Peter stood under the school's cherry tree beside twenty of his peers, an occasional blossom falling annoying into his hair. The omegas had to wait a mere five minutes under the gentle shower of petals before the alphas were brought in. They were given the usual speech, about how Oxford's omegas were trained and educated far better than any others in her majesty's kingdom, and Peter spent this time examining the possibilities. Quite honestly, all alphas looked the same to him. Broad shoulders, shining hair, and a occasional little stubble on their upper lip. They all wore coats of gold, blue, and red, expect one man near the back of the group. Peter's eyes flew him to him almost immediately, and the boy frowned.

Peter was certain only alphas bought omegas, and get the man didn't smell like alpha. No, Peter was almost certain this was an omega. The tall, slender man wore a black suit embroidered with green and gold, a small sneer upon his lips. Peter's eyes didn't leave the odd man until the speech ended, and each of the alphas stepped forward, running their eyes and hands over the omegas. Peter was surprised, though, when the odd omega made a beeline for him, looking him up and down.

"You are interested in Peter?" The dean murmured, moving to stand beside the curly haired boy. "He is an excellent choice, Lord Odinson. A bit feisty, though."

"Feisty I can handle," Lord Odinson replied smoothly, looking Peter up and down. "Does he bite?"

"When asked to," The dean chuckled knowingly.

Peter couldn't help the small glare upon his face as Lord Odinson ran his thumb along Peter's bottom lip, before stepping back and nodding.

"Yes, I will take him," the other omega nodded sharply once. "He will do."

And so, with a mere five words, Peter's fate was sealed with the flourish of a fountain pen and the snick of something golden settling around his neck. Although it was not customary for an omega to purchase another omega, Peter wondered if perhaps he was lucky. Perhaps this omega would grant him the kindness that the rumors said that alphas lacked. The man led Peter to a ornate horse drawn carriage, and the moment they were inside, Peter practically bubbled with nervous excitement.

"You're another omega!" Peter declared excitedly, his voice hushed. "I can't believe I've been bought by another omega! I thought that an alpha would buy me and everything would turn awful, but we're practically on the same grounds and-"

Peter was utterly not expecting the slap that echoed through the coach, and he felt angry tears fill his eyes as he reached one hand up to touch his stinging right cheek.

"You will speak when spoken to," the other omega spat, his voice dangerous. "And you will not imply yourself to be on the same grounds as I am."

"Yes, sir," Peter murmured, swallowing hard. He wondered if the conversation would continue, however Lord Odinson turned to stare out the window, and so Peter did the same, settling in for a long, quiet carriage ride.

"You're admiring the house?"

"Yes sir," Peter murmured. He turned his head away from the window, settling his gaze instead on the sleek omega sitting beside him. The ride from Oxford to... wherever they were going had felt long, but not unpleasant. Lord Odinson had a regal air about him, and though at first the lack of conversation and the slap had eaten away at Peter, the boy had fallen into an easy day dream. He stared out the window of the coach to watch the countryside pass him by until the horse drawn carriage rolled under the cast-iron gates of some incredible manor, leaving Peter a bit breathless at the idea that this might be his new home.

"You like it?" Lord Odinson asked, a hint of amusement behind those dark, dangerous eyes.

"Yes sir, it's beautiful," Peter murmured.

Loki scoffed and rolled his eyes, "It's gaudy and ridiculous, but my father likes it so for now it will have to remain."

"Your father?" Peter asked as the coach pulled up along the front of the manor. He heard the coachman grumbling something under his breath as he got down from his seat outside and moved to open the door. Hurrying to finish his thought, Peter asked, "Did you buy me for your father, Lord Odinson?"

"No, I bought you for myself," the omega scoffed as if it was the most ridiculous question in the world. When the coachman opened the door, the lord stepped out and then waited impatiently for Peter to scramble after him. "But I would rather you not call me by that name, omega. Come."

"Yes m'lord, but my name is Peter, not omega," Peter muttered, hurrying along behind the lord

up the grand, marble steps of the manor.

“Your name is whatever I want it to be,” the lord snapped, before pulling the door open and nodding for Peter to enter. Once inside, Peter only had a moment to look around before the air shifted, and then he was flinching because oh sweet mother of pearl the smell of alpha was everywhere, especially on the muscular man hugging Lord Odinson.

“Brother!” The man declared. “Loki, you are home! And you have the new omega. Welcome, omega. What is your name? I am Thor.”

“*It* doesn’t have a name yet,” Loki spat softly, dusting himself off from Thor’s hug.

“Oh come now,” Thor chuckled. “Surely we can show the newest member of our house some kindness. Did his school not name him?”

“And you think father will show any kindness?” Loki muttered, shocking Peter with the way the odd, dark omega spoke out against his apparent brother. “Your stupidity surprises even me sometimes.”

“Brother-“

Thor’s voice was interrupted when soft footsteps sounded through the echoing foyer, and then an elderly gentleman with a monocle and a golden cane stepped into the room. Both Thor and Loki bowed their heads, so Peter took the hint and did so as well. He trembled as a finger traced up his neck and then gently tipped his chin up so that he was looking into the elderly alpha’s eyes.

“This is the new omega?” The man murmured, his voice smooth, gentle, soothing. The pad of his thumb traced along Peter’s cheekbone, and Peter swallowed instinctively. “He is beautiful. You have made a good decision, my son.”

“Thank you, father,” Loki murmured, his voice just barely tinged with bitterness.

“You will have him trained within the end of the week,” the man stepped man suddenly, letting Peter go without warning. The boy shivered as if being pulled from a trance, his breathing picking up when the man pushed one hand through his curls.

“The end of the week?” Loki questioned, a slight growl in his voice. “Do you not think that rather... Abrupt?”

“Lord Stark is coming for a party on Friday night. I expect the omega to be prepared,” the man replied smoothly. “I’m sure it will not be difficult for you, my son. You are so excellent at manners, are you not?”

Peter wasn’t entirely sure why, but it sounded as if there was a threat in the man’s voice, and the boy had to push a frown away when a small tremble shook through Loki’s body.

“Yes father,” Loki nodded once. “The omega will be prepared.”

“And does the omega have a name yet?” The older man asked.

“Peter,” Loki replied. “His name is Peter.”

“Hm, adequate,” the man nodded, and then slowly walked away, his cane tapping periodically on the tiled floor.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment and let me know if this is even something anyone is interested in, and ideas anyone has for the plot because like I'm still figuring out where this is going!

Oh No!

Chapter Notes

So a big thank you to lokisloneylady for helping beta this chapter and giving me some great ideas. I have developed a bit more of a storyline now, and the tags have been updated accordingly.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*I know exactly what I want and who I want to be
I know exactly why I walk and talk like a machine
I'm now becoming my own self-fulfilled prophecy*

The manor was beautiful, both outside and in, and so as Peter followed Loki through the halls lined with portraits and mirrors, the boy found himself almost excited about which room would be given to him. He was dismayed, however, as they traveled from the second floor to the third, and then stopped at a rickety old door which creaked when Loki pushed it open.

Peter peered into the dimly lit hall unhappily, but a single warning glare from Loki was enough to send Peter scampering down the hall past doors that looked either unused or in desperate need of a bit of oil at the hinges.

“Where are we going, Sir?” Peter murmured as they neared the end of the hall.

“Your room,” Loki replied, pushing open the last door on the left to reveal a decrepit wooden bed, a large clothes cabinet, and an oddly ornate floor to ceiling mirror. The only lighting came from a dusty window over the bed, and Peter coughed as a wave of dust entered his airways.

“I’m staying here?” Peter questioned a little mournfully. “This is... my room?”

“Indeed, you little ingrate,” Loki spat, stepping in after Peter. “You shall sleep in this bed, and I have arranged for your clothes to be hung in this cabinet. I expect you to be in top shape at all times. I am unsure what you were wearing at your school, but here you will be wearing a highly tailored, selected wardrobe. I have laid out a sample outfit on your bed. You shall dress accordingly each day. You will then go to the kitchen to help serve breakfast. You will not eat a single piece of food without my permission, do you understand?”

“Yes sir,” Peter murmured.

“After breakfast,” Loki went on. “We will have lessons. Your lessons will continue through the afternoon, and at dinner you shall assist in serving the food. If you’re good I may allow you to dine. Am I understood?”

“Yes sir,” Peter murmured. “And... lunch?”

“You will not ask questions,” Loki growled. “Now, change into your new clothes.”

Peter took a deep, clearing breath, almost coughed from the dust, and then stepped over to the bed where the clothes were laid out. The suit itself was unsurprising and uninteresting, but it was the object sitting beside it that gave Peter pause. He blinked at it, before slowly demanding, “What is

that?"

"It is a corset, you uncultured brat," Loki frowned. "I thought you were taught something at that school."

"I know what it is, we wore them every time an alpha came to visit. I want to know why it's on my bed," Peter pressed his lips together.

"It is there because you will be wearing one at all times as any omega of high society does," Loki replied. "Now change."

"I will not," Peter spoke back for the first time, turning and crossing his arms. He had suffered the indignity of the odd golden collar around his neck, and Loki's near constant insults, but the awful room and now this pushed Peter to a point where he was honestly done taking orders from another omega.

For years Peter had trained and prepared himself mentally for the reality that he would be sold to play housewife to an alpha. Peter had been taught everything about how to be a perfect omega for an alpha, but this was ridiculous. Never in a million years had he expected to be taking orders from another omega. An alpha asking him to wear the offending clothing item was one thing, but this felt entirely inappropriate and humiliating. As if to prove his point, Peter took a step closer to Loki and declared, "You cannot make me wear that."

"You will do as I say," Loki's voice lowered three octaves, his eyes flashing. "Put it on, now."

"No," Peter challenged. "I won't. And certainly not without you leaving the room."

"Now," Loki growled once more.

"No."

One moment Peter was making a valiant stand, the next he was being yanked by his hair towards the bed, crying out softly as his blue dress suit was ripped from him leaving Peter bare chested and terrified. He opened his mouth to cry out, but a yank on his hair had him keening instead as the corset was forced around his middle and then pulled so tight Peter couldn't get enough air in to be able to make any noise at all.

The moment it was tied in place, Loki stepped away, leaving Peter a whining, whimpering mess.

"You listen to me," Loki panted. "When I ask you to do something, you will do it without question. It does not matter that I am an omega, I am your master now. I bought you, I own you. Do you understand me, Peter?"

"Yes sir," Peter whimpered, closing his eyes tightly against the shame burning on his cheeks.

"Good. Now change into the rest of your clothes," Loki stepped back and adjusted his high necked suit collar. "But take your time. Our lessons begin tomorrow morning. I believe you will not be eating for the rest of the day. You are to stay in your room, and don't make any noise. Am I understood?"

"Yes sir," Peter whispered.

"Good," Loki nodded once. "If you are good perhaps I will allow you lunch tomorrow. But you will eat only with my permission. Am I understood? Good. Then I shall see you in the morning."

And so Peter was left in the small, stuffy room, staring down at the red and black corset cinched around himself. For a moment he considered ripping it off, but then he supposed that Loki might come back any moment, so Peter pulled the rest of his clothes on and moved to glance in the mirror. What he spotted dismayed him all the more, for carved into the collar were the words, 'Property of Lord Loki Odinson'. It was a simple phrase, but it felt like a death sentence. If Peter had ever even considered the idea that he would one day be the property to another omega, he would have never gone to that school, never left his aunt. And yet... And yet Peter knew far too well that his aunt couldn't afford to feed herself, let alone him. Really, no matter his thoughts, he'd really never had any other option.

Sighing, Peter sat on his bed, trying to breath under the corset. He grew quickly bored, and he ached for a good book to read, yet the hours passed with nothing to entertain himself with but memories.

Peter thought about life before Loki, about life before his school. He thought about a time when he'd had parents who kissed him and told him he'd be loved no matter how he presented. He thought about the small room in which they'd lived until the fire, and then he thought about his aunt and uncle, and about the factory where his uncle worked alongside Peter until the boy presented as omega and had been sent away. He thought about when he'd said goodbye to his aunt, when he promised they'd find each other again and that he would send her money after he was wed to an alpha.

Peter thought about his school, a self proclaimed safe haven for destitute, orphaned omegas. His school promised omegas that, no matter their upbringing and background, omega pupils would be taught and treated as proper ladies and gentlemen until the time for them to be bonded to an alpha. Peter had grown up hearing about what an honor it was to wed and serve an alpha. Peter's school had impressed upon him that there was no greater honor for an omega than to help keep house, pleasure, and submit to one's alpha.

Lastly, Peter thought about Loki. Despite Peter's occasional fear of alphas (for he knew that to truly respect an alpha was to fear an alpha), being owned by Loki was far worse than any future he had envisioned for himself. Peter knew that marriage to an alpha brought completeness and satisfaction to an omega's life. Such a marriage elevated an omega, brought purpose. Being forced to submit to another omega... Surely there was no worse humiliation, and Peter wondered what he'd done to deserve this indignity. And so, as the room turned as dark as a cave, Peter cried himself to sleep, feeling more alone in that small room than he had in many years.

Chapter End Notes

I loved reading all your comments on the last chapter! They really feed my muse and keep me plugging away at writing. Updates may not always be this frequent, but since I had this chapter written I wanted to get it out. Please let me know what you think! I'm always open to people providing me a little inspiration and letting me know what you'd like to potentially see in future chapters

Seventeen

Chapter Notes

Thanks for the comments last chapter! And another big thank you to lokisloneylady who will be helping beta this and future chapters :)

Now we're starting to get into the meat of the story. Loki might seem awful here, but you'll find out that everyone in this story is more than they first seem...

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*I felt you question the way
I was brought up as a baby
Well you don't know fuck about my family*

*Could never tell you what happened
The day I turned seventeen
The rise of a king and the fall of a queen*

Peter's schooling had been rigorous, and had prepared him for many occasions. He had never been a star pupil, but according to his teachers he was above average intelligence for an omega. Of course he'd been warned more than once that his cheeky personality would land him in trouble one day, but there had never been a situation so troublesome that a cute smile and a few clever remarks couldn't save him. Visiting alphas had apparently always found him appealing enough that any of his missteps were rapidly forgiven by them, allowing the school to go easy on his punishments. And yet, standing here in a beautiful bedroom, surrounded by luxury, Peter felt utterly out of his depth. It wasn't because of the embroidered sheets, or the teak floors, or even the golden music box perched on the window sill. No, Peter's eyes were glued to the little cushion sitting innocently beside the desk.

"You want me to... what?" Peter blinked, turning away from the offending cushion and back to the frustrated omega standing in back of him. The morning had been little better than last night. Peter felt dizzy with hunger, and though he had assisted the kind cook with breakfast and then served the food, Peter had not been allowed a single morsel. The moment breakfast ended, Peter had been instructed to follow Loki up the stairs to a beautiful bedroom (presumably Loki's) where he now stood, glaring. "I'm sorry, m'lord, but I'm afraid I don't understand..."

"That," Loki sighed, rubbing the bridge of his nose. "Is where you kneel until you are needed. This Friday my father is hosting a dance and you will be presented as the new household omega. My omega, specifically. You will be kneeling on a similar cushion until you are asked to dance. When you are done dancing, you will return to your cushion."

"My cushion?" Peter spluttered, his eyebrows drawing together. "I'm not certain you understand, m'lord." Peter spat the title like it was an insult, his hunger making him snappish and utterly sick of putting up with Loki. At least the tightness of the corset might be making his stomach smaller and less ravenous. "I am not that kind of omega, and I do not kneel for other omegas."

"You are what I say you are," Loki snapped, his eyes fiery. "I bought you, I own you, and you will do as I say."

"I don't even understand you," Peter muttered angrily, stubbornly refusing to move one inch. "You're an omega! Why would you bother with any of this? I thought we were supposed to be on the same side! I took classes at school in all sorts of things, cooking, sewing, literature, alphacare, that is what I'm supposed to do. Not kneel for another omega!"

Peter let out a gasp of surprise when one moment he was standing, the next he was on the ground, holding his face. Peter struggled to catch his breath, turning to face the enraged omega, and scampering backwards when Loki made a grab for his shirt collar.

"When I tell you to kneel," Loki spat, hoisting the struggling boy into the air. "You will kneel. You are nothing but a street urchin, caught as a child and pampered into believing you mean something in this world. Omegas like you, you have no family to call your own, nothing but the ideas pumped into your head that your petty little life has some value. Well, perhaps I will have to be the first to tell you that you have no value. I bought you, and I can just as easily throw you away, back to the streets from whence you came."

"I have an aunt," Peter spat right back, glaring hatefully at Loki. "She loves me!"

"And yet you ended up in that orphanage they call a school. I wonder, was the wench too destitute to keep you around, or did you simply try her patience as much as you do mine? Either way, I'm sure she was glad to be rid of you," Loki spat.

"At least I admit what I am. I don't go around pretending to be an alpha!" Peter spat right back.

"You know nothing, you pathetic child," Loki growled, hoisting Peter a little further into the air and eliciting a slight squeak from the boy. "But if you refuse to cooperate, then I will replace you. So I suggest we try this again. When I say that you kneel, you kneel, as any omega of your station should know to do!"

Peter was shoved to the ground, and he couldn't help the soft whine that escaped his throat when his palms hit the ground.

"I'm not the one who's pathetic," Peter muttered, but he slunk over to the pillow and knelt, feeling half like sticking his tongue out at the omega. Loki must have sensed it, somehow, because he marched over and dug his hands into Peter's curls in a grip so strong that Peter's eyes prickled with tears.

"You will stay here until you are called for dinner, and you will not move. Do you understand?" Loki spat.

"I-"

"No wonder your parents died, with a simpleton like you for a child. I said do you understand!?" Loki roared.

"Yes m'lord," Peter whimpered, swallowing hard when his hair was finally released. He pulled his bottom lip between his teeth and chewed it until Loki was out the door, but the moment it clicked into place, Peter curled into a ball and began to sob.

It took Peter a little over an hour to calm down and dry his tears, and what felt like several hours before the knob of the door began to wiggle, and Peter scrambled to kneel on his pillow again. He ducked his head submissively, but the voice that greeted him was not that of his keeper.

"Peter!" The voice boomed, and Peter looked up in surprise to see Thor standing there. He stared at the boy for several moments, before the man's eyebrows drew together in apparent confusion and

he asked, "Omega, what on Earth are you doing down there?"

"I'm... kneeling? M'lord Odinson," Peter tried not to whimper, and he had to force himself to look up and meet the eyes of the broad shouldered alpha.

"Kneeling?" Thor blinked. "Why are you kneeling?"

"Because.... Because M'lord's brother asked me to. Because I'm an omega of... Of my station," Peter murmured softly.

"Of what station? Utterly ridiculous. Stand, Peter, you are a noble omega of the house of Odin, and you need kneel to no one. Is this why you missed luncheon?"

"Luncheon?" Peter murmured, his stomach aching for some food.

"Yes, is this why you did not attend luncheon?" Thor asked incredulously. "Stand, Omega Peter, you will have food at once."

"Um... M'lord, I'm not entirely sure I... I'm meant to do that?" Peter bit his lip. "It's just.... M'lord's brother instructed me that I am not to eat unless he allows me to do so?"

"What?" Thor blinked, genuinely confused.

"I... Because I'm an omega, so I... I eat only when told, M'lord," Peter asked hesitantly.

"You are already slender, Omega Peter. That is not necessary," Thor replied casually. "Come, sit at my desk. I will retrieve luncheon."

Peter blinked as the alpha maneuvered him up and into the large chair at the desk. He stared in surprise as Thor lumbered away and came back with a plate of food, more food than he had ever seen in one place, which was placed in front of him. Yet his confusion wasn't only about the amount of food sitting in front of him.

"Your desk?" Peter asked. "I'm sorry, m'lord, but I thought this was your brother's room?"

"Loki's room? Goodness, no!" Thor laughed, pushing his hair back from his face. "No, no perhaps in his best dreams, yes? No, Omega Peter, of course this is my room. Now eat, or the luncheon will become cold."

Peter didn't need to be told twice, and he happily tucked in, gobbling food fast as he could manage. Thor took a seat in an armchair on the other side of the room, studying Peter until the omega ravenously finished the entire plate, humming in quiet satisfaction once the food was done. Thor pressed a button on the wall, and moments later a beta girl who Peter didn't recognize rushed in to grab the plates. Peter gazed after her as she scurried away, wishing for some kind of friend in this big house, but a soft sound from the back of Thor's throat brought Peter's attention back to the man.

"So, Peter," Thor spoke, an odd sort of chuckle in his eyes. "What other sorts of nonsense has my brother been teaching you?"

"Well, m'lord, our lessons have only just begun. I'm... I'm meant to kneel when I'm not needed, and to eat when told to, and to only speak when spoken to?" Peter murmured, stubbornly leaving out any reference to the corset pressing around his middle. There were some things this alpha simply did not need to know.

“Surely he must be jesting!” Thor laughed heartily “I have never heard such nonsense. Of course parties are parties, but Loki can’t really expect you to run around behaving in such a way all the time?”

“M’lord?” Peter asked timidly. “I’m afraid I don’t understand.”

“What is to not understand? Here, come sit beside me,” Thor shrugged easily. He motioned for Peter to stand, and the omega did so, hesitantly sinking into the armchair beside the alpha. It was soft, plushy, and wonderful, yet it made Peter distinctly uncomfortable for some reason. He sat at attention, studying every motion from the alpha closely. He was unprepared for any level of kindness after Loki’s treatment last night, and yet this only further cemented Peter’s longing for an alpha. It was the proper order of things, for an omega to belong to an alpha, and Loki’s awful treatment showed that, indeed, changing that natural order, putting an omega in charge of another omega, must be wrong.

“Peter, we will be having a party on Friday for Tony,” Thor spoke again, startling Peter out of his thoughts. “He’s a sort of... roguish fellow, but surely all of this isn’t necessary, hm? From this moment on you will speak when you like, you will eat when you like, and surely there is no need to kneel on my bedroom floor, yes?”

“I...” Peter hesitated, his throat a little dry. His tongue darted out to lick at his upper lip, before he nodded shallowly. “Yes, m’Lord Odinson. As you wish. You don’t think... I mean M’lord’s brother is the one who purchased me...”

“Nonsense,” Thor declared, starting Peter when he clapped a hand upon the boy’s shoulder. “You listen to me, Omega Peter, not my silly little brother.”

“He’s your younger brother?” Peter asked, curious despite himself.

“He is adopted, so I am not entirely sure of his age. But yes, I should like to think so,” Thor chuckled softly, reaching over to pick up a toasting flute that Peter hadn’t noticed before. He took a long sip. “So, Omega Peter, where do you come from?”

“I... I’m from Oxford,” Peter replied quietly. “The school for Omegas there.”

“Really?” Thor looked surprised, before taking another sip from his glass. “Most interesting. So you are an orphan, yes? As I recall they are famous for their projects. Providing a future for omegas who have none? Turning street omegas into high society? I am surprised my brother would traverse such a place. He has never been an advocate of charity work.”

“I... My parents died when I was very young,” Peter murmured. “But I used to live with my aunt and uncle. My uncle was killed in a factory accident when I was twelve and then I started the school when I was thirteen.”

“And how old are you now?”

“I’m seventeen, m’lord,” Peter murmured, ducking his head. “The age all omegas are when they are.... sold.”

“Ah, yes of course,” Thor hesitated only a moment before nodding. “I am sorry Peter, I’m not all that familiar with the process of buying an omega. Of course I will not be purchasing one personally. Father will arrange for mine.”

“I see... I’m sorry, m’lord, but... you said M’lord’s brother is adopted?” Peter asked timidly, sneaking a glance up at Thor, whose face returned to an easy smile.

“Oh yes, although I cannot remember it,” Thor beamed. “Father said that Loki is the child of a villager who used to work here as a maid. Her husband was killed in London somehow, and she got sick not long after. My father took kindness on the child, and now I am lucky enough to have a brother, and I would not trade him for the world, even if he tires me greatly sometimes.”

“M’lord, if I may, why did he buy me?” Peter asked, licking his lips once the question was out. “I thought only alphas purchased omegas like me.”

“Why, Loki is a member of the house of Odin!” Thor declared, as if that should be self explanatory.

“It’s just... we’re taught how to...” Peter blushed. “How to help alphas, not omegas, M’lord.”

“You are not taught on how to be a handmaid?” Thor’s brows drew together.

“Sir?”

“A handmaid,” Thor repeated, growing concerned. “All members of the house of Odin require an omega. Of course my brother is a mere omega himself, but that doesn’t prohibit him from inviting you into our home. You are to help around the house, but as my brother’s omega you are also a member of the house of Odin yourself!”

“You mean... I’m afraid I’m still confused,” Peter admitted softly. “I am trained to.... My school taught us literature, sewing, cooking, and how to.... to assist the alpha we are wed to. Am I to wed another omega?”

“Wed?” Thor asked slowly, before bursting into laughter and slapping his leg loud enough to make Peter jump. “Wed Loki? Omega Peter, you should have gone to the stage to tell stories of comedy! Loki is an omega, he will wed a wealthy alpha, of course! In fact, I believe father has his sights on Tony! He owns a most profitable factory in London, after all, completely run by machines. No, you are Loki’s omega, his life companion. You assist my brother during... You will be the only one who can attend to him, of course, when...”

“Sir?” Peter murmured hesitantly.

“You are to attend him until he weds, and then when his alpha is not present. You will be the member of the house to bring him food and care for him on those days when he cannot leave his chambers. You are his life’s companion,” Thor explained. “You were not taught of this in your school?”

“No,” Peter murmured, swallowing hard against the nervous little lump growing in his throat. “You mean... forever, M’lord Odinson? I... my school taught me how to wed an alpha, how to care for an alpha, and instead I will be... be serving an omega forever? M’lord?”

“Indeed,” a sharp voice cut through the room. “You will be.”

Peter froze the moment he heard the voice, and any amount of comfort he’d received in talking with Thor turned into ice that settled in the bottom of his belly.

“Brother!” Thor grinned, standing to place his hands in either of Loki’s shoulders. “I very much enjoy your omega. He is an excellent companion.”

“Indeed?” Loki snapped softly, his eyes glaring daggers into Peter, sending the boy curling up in his chair. “I am glad you enjoyed yourself. But I believe I will require my omega now. Immediately.”

“Oh yes, I will be in the stable if you require anything brother,” Thor beamed, either disregarding or genuinely too thick to notice the desperate glance Peter sent him. “Farewell! I shall see you at dinner, Omega Peter.”

And with that the door snapped closed, leaving Peter trembling under Loki’s deadly glare.

Chapter End Notes

Poor Peter :/ How do you all think Loki’s going to react? And what do you think of Thor? I’ll do my best to have the next chapter up by next weekend, but I don’t have a strict posting schedule

The State Of Dreaming

Chapter Notes

I've got a longer chapter for you all, and it's up by/before Saturday as promised! :)
Beta: Lokislonlylady :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*All I really want is to be wonderful
People in this town, they can be so cruel
I live my life inside a dream
Only waking when I sleep
If I could sell my sorry soul, I would have it all

My life is a play*

If looks could kill, Peter would have already combusted and turned into a little pile of ashes. Loki's eyes could be described as nothing short of deadly, his muscles tense and coiled, much like a snake preparing to strike. The room was covered in a thick layer of dangerous silence, the only sound a soft ticking from a clock Peter had not noticed before. The silence stretched on, Loki glaring daggers at Peter until the smaller omega first twitched, then fidgeted, and then finally began to speak.

"M'lord, please, I-"

"You will not speak," Loki spat, his voice absolutely dripping with venom. Peter immediately quieted, returning to fidgeting and swallowing, seeming to shrink down and become even smaller, engulfed by the armchair built for an alpha. Loki glared for a moment more, before he spoke again, his voice no less dangerous. "My brother, did he provide you with lunch?"

"M'lord, I, please, I-"

"Answer the question," Loki hissed. "And do not lie to me."

"Yes M'lord," Peter whimpered, before quickly pushing on and adding, "But he told me to, sir, he said I had to, he said-"

"Do I look like I care what my half witted brother said?" Loki growled.

"No sir," Peter whimpered, ducking his head. There was another long beat of silence, during which Peter refused to look up, refused to meet the other omega's eyes, even as his hands twisted and turned nervously in his lap. He was left squirming for several long moment, before Loki sighed and spoke again.

"However," Loki's voice, though still dangerous, almost sounded resigned. Peter chanced a look up, and he bit the inside of his cheek at the odd, unreadable expression upon Loki's face.

"Whatever my brother is, he is an alpha, and you are not to disobey an alpha's orders, correct? Correct Peter?"

"Yes Sir?" Peter whimpered, unsure if that was the correct answer. It must've been, though,

because Loki nodded.

“Correct,” Loki repeated. This time it was not a question. “My brother is an alpha, and so you must obey him. In fact, as an alpha, he is a superior yes? Why, then, even listen to me? I am just another omega, yes? I bought you, with my own money. I bought you, and I owned you, and yet Thor is an alpha, so why shouldn’t he simply be your new master? He did not choose you, he did not pay for you, but he is a superior. Why, then, even listen to the omega who paid money for you? Why not simply listen to the superior alpha?”

“Sir?” Peter whimpered.

“I asked you a question,” Loki snapped, his dangerous gaze returning.

“I... I don’t... Sir, M’lord, I... I don’t know... I’m not certain what you want me to say,” Peter finally whimpered, ducking his head. He wasn’t entirely certain why, but odd tears pricked at the edges of his eyes. It was easy to push them away with a firm blink, but it was far harder to swallow the lump in his throat.

“I see,” Loki snapped, folding his hands in his lap, his forefingers steepling. There was another long beat of silence, and the longer it stretched on, the more uncomfortable Peter became, until finally he caved, having to clear his throat when he spoke.

“I’m sorry, M’Lord,” Peter murmured, his head still ducked in submission.

“For what?” Loki pushed.

“For... For disobeying you,” Peter tried, looking up.

“You were simply obeying an alpha,” Loki murmured. Peter flinched as the back of Loki’s knuckles ever so gently brushed against his cheek. “That is not a reason to apologize. You were doing the right thing. You know better than to ever disobey an alpha’s command.”

“Then I... Sir, I...”

“You received lunch today, yes? Then you will return to your rooms for the rest of the day, and you will not emerge for dinner,” Loki murmured. “Tomorrow, I will fetch you after breakfast, and we will continue with our lessons.”

“Sir-” Peter was interrupted by a firm slap, the sound of which reverberated around the room, and this time tears really did form in Peter’s eyes, and no amount of blinking kept them from rolling silently down his cheeks.

“Your first lesson clearly needs to be one on speaking when spoken to,” Loki growled dangerously. “Were you taught to dance with alphas in your school?”

“Yes sir,” Peter whimpered.

“General table etiquette?”

“Yes sir.”

“Then perhaps we will resume your lesson on kneeling,” Loki eyes narrowed. “As that lesson clearly was not followed today. Friday is but two days away. When the party arrives you will need to be prepared to be presented. You will address all noble omegas as M’lord and M’lady, you will not speak a word to other omegas of your station, you will obey all alphas, you will speak only

when spoken to, and you will pretend to be happy with the entire situation even if your simpering little heart is breaking with every pretty little twirl you take on that dance floor. Is that understood?"

"Yes sir," Peter murmured.

"Good. Now go to your chambers. You will find a pitcher of water there and a tea cup. You are not to leave your chambers until I fetch you tomorrow morning. Goodnight, Peter," Loki finished with a soft, dangerous little snarl, before standing, turning sharply, and then leaving Peter trying not to snifle.

The trek back to his room felt long and every step felt muted by the thoughts swirling through Peter's head. He had so many questions. He felt so confused. He hated Loki, despised him, perhaps feared him, and Peter could think of no good reason why he had just genuinely apologized to him. Not only that, but he had actually felt guilty. How dare Loki, with all of his terrible treatment, somehow get inside Peter's head enough that Peter felt some level of guilt for disobeying him? It made absolutely no sense, and somehow it simply made Peter more angry at the other omega.

For the first time, with Thor, Peter had felt some semblance of comfort. Shockingly, he had not felt attracted to the alpha in the way he knew omegas were meant to be. Instead Peter had felt a sense of something close to comradery, and Loki had utterly spoiled it. As Peter marched into his little room, the omega felt anger, loathing, sadness, and a strange sense of loss bubble up inside him. For a long moment, Peter simply stood in the doorway, his bottom lip trembling. He observed the tiny bed, the ancient dresser, the strange ornate mirror, the metal pitcher, and the delicate teacup Loki had placed on his bedside table. And then, he exploded with pent up emotion.

Peter let out a soft cry, grabbing the little porcelain teacup and hurling it at the wall. It shattered into dozens of tiny pieces, the sound echoing through the room. For only a moment, Peter felt a strange sense of power and control, before it evaporated and Peter threw himself face down into the bed, sobbing into his pillow.

The night passed slowly for Peter, the only sound in his room being that of his growling stomach. By the morning, Peter felt dizzy with hunger, and his hands trembled as he pulled that awful corset around himself. He felt that he waited an eternity for Loki to arrive, yet just as Peter finished pulling on his shoes, there was a soft knock at his door. Moments later, Loki strolled into the room, his hands tucked behind his back and an unreadable expression on his face.

Peter licked his lips, bowed his head, and waited for Loki to speak. The silence stretched on, and on, though, so eventually Peter murmured a soft, "Good morning."

"Good morning," Loki replied, his voice not all together harsh. "Have you had enough of starving yourself?"

"Starving myself? You're keeping me from eating!" Peter complained, looking up to let his angry eyes meet Loki's.

"Hm, evidently not," Loki shrugged. "Ah well, come along Peter, follow me."

Loki spun, waiting for the soft creak as Peter stood from his bed. Once Peter caught his balance, Loki led him down the hall, each step feeling as though it required an incredible amount of effort. Peter winced when his stomach rumbled loudly, yet Loki didn't seem to notice. Loki's brisk pace never faltered, leaving Peter scampering along behind him as they marched down two flights of

stairs and then through a pair of ornate double doors. The room they entered, though, caused Peter to pause in his tracks.

“This is the ballroom,” Loki declared, his voice echoing in the vast chamber. “It is where you shall be presented on Friday. Come, I will show you where you will kneel.”

It was with a sort of a numb, ringing in his ears that Peter followed Loki across the recently polished floor. The golden tiles quite literally sparkled under the light of grand chandeliers which hung from the ceiling, the golden walls shining with a regal sort of elegance. As they approached a set of red velvet chairs, Peter couldn’t help but murmur, “This room, it’s beautiful.”

“Is it?” Loki replied, his voice much softer than Peter had ever heard. “I suppose one could call it beautiful. I suppose. Now then.”

Loki turned suddenly, causing Peter to yelp softly as he nearly ran into the other omega. “I believe we have our lessons to continue, hm? This is my seat. It is where I will return after dances and socializing. And that, Peter, is your pillow.”

Peter swallowed hard as he looked first at the regal, throne-like chair, and then at the tiny, red velvet cushion resting beside it. He flinched when Loki silently pointed to it, but Peter felt far too faint to argue, and so he slowly moved to kneel upon the cushion, ducking his head. He flinched when Loki settled into his throne (or at least it seemed like a throne to Peter) and then settled his hand into Peter’s curls, stroking them.

“Very good,” Loki murmured. “These are our positions for the dance. You will remain at your pillow unless you are directly addressed and asked to dance with someone. You will not speak unless you are spoken to. Am I understood Peter? Peter?”

“Hm? Oh, yes sir,” Peter murmured, swallowing hard as his head snapped up from where it had begun to loll on his chest. Loki’s eyes narrowed at him, looking him up and down several times. The look made Peter distinctly uncomfortable, and yet he felt far too light headed to protest. He hadn’t noticed that his head was lolling again until there was a finger underneath his chin, tipping his head up to meet Loki’s eyes.

“I’m sorry sir...” Peter murmured, forcing his eyes up to meet Loki’s. “I don’t feel so well, I... I believe that my stomach.... I feel sort of sick...”

“You will continue to kneel,” Loki declared as he stood. “Do not move, am I understood?”

“I... yes sir,” Peter murmured, ducking his head again and clutching his hands in front of him to try and still their shaking. He wasn’t entirely sure he’d noticed when Loki had left, but he certainly noticed when Loki reappeared in his throne, gazing down at him silently.

“You’ve done well,” Loki decided, his voice echoing over the soft ringing in Peter’s ears. “I believe you deserve some lunch. Here...”

Peter looked up in confusion when Loki’s fingers appeared in front of his mouth, a tidbit of food in them. Peter’s dizzy mind analyzed the situation for several moments, the smell of the food entirely tempting, yet then it clicked that Loki was attempting to feed Peter food from his fingers, and Peter snapped angrily. Literally. Peter leaned forward and bit Loki’s fingers, hard. The other omega swore softly, cuffing Peter upside the head until Peter let his aching fingers go.

“You insolent little monster!” Loki spat, waking Peter up as he firmly grabbed the boy’s hair. Peter whimpered, startled and frightened but still dizzy with hunger. “You don’t want to eat? Fine. Then

you will continue to kneel on your little pillow without the gift of food! But on Friday, alphas will be offering you tidbits from their fingers and I strongly suggest you keep your teeth to yourself.”

Peter whimpered softly as he was hauled back up onto his pillow, his head shoved down to look at the floor. Loki stalked off to somewhere and then returned with a thick book. Peter tried to focus on the soft sounds of well worn paper as Loki flipped through its pages, yet his mind seemed far more preoccupied with his stomach’s desperation for even the smallest bite of food. It must’ve been well over an hour before another tidbit of something was held in front of his lips. This time, Peter pressed his eyes shut, tried to pretend he was anywhere else, and gingerly took the bit of food from Loki’s fingers. Peter’s stomach tried to rebel, but the boy forced down the apple crumble, and for that he was rewarded with a pat on the head.

The afternoon was long and altogether humiliating, but when the room began to darken, dusk falling outside, Loki finally snapped his book shut.

“You did very well today, Peter,” Loki murmured, standing and setting his book aside. “Perhaps there is hope for you yet. Tonight you will be serving the dinner. Keep your lessons in mind, my father will be judging your progress. If you do well tonight, you will be allowed to have your dinner in the kitchen before returning to your room. Do you understand?”

There was an odd sort of look in Loki’s eyes, one that made Peter feel incredibly on edge, so he swallowed down his glare and nodded submissively instead. Loki observed him for a moment more, before he nodded sharply, and motioned for Peter to rise.

“Good, then come along,” Loki murmured. “It’s time for dinner.”

The cook, a kind elderly Scottish woman by the name of Molly, helped Peter prepare for serving the food. Evidently serving dinner to the Odin family was much more of an event than serving breakfast, so Peter was incredibly thankful for every bit of advice that Molly could give him. Peter also spotted the beta girl from yesterday hurrying about the room, helping with a few last minute details. Peter learned that her name was Shuri, that she was a paid servant, that she lived in the village situated just beyond the Manor, and that she hardly needed this job as she was from a family of influence, however that was exactly why she was hired for this job. Peter had hoped for a moment to speak with her, however just as he was getting up his courage, a soft bell chimed, and Molly nodded at Peter.

“There’s your cue,” Molly murmured. “Go on now, and don’t make a muck of it.”

Shuri offered Peter a playful sort of smile, which made the boy blush, square his shoulders, and then march out into the dining room. The room practically glowed with candles which flickered with Peter’s approaching footsteps. Loki observed Peter silently from over the rim of his golden glass of wine. After a moment, Loki took a long sip, but never broke eye contact.

“Your dinner, M’lord,” Peter murmured as he moved to Odin first, as Molly had instructed him to. “I hope it is to your satisfaction.”

Odin hummed noncommittally, stabbing a bit of meat with his fork. Peter hesitated for only a moment before moving on and repeating the action and words to Thor next, and lastly to Loki. The brunette seemed determined to meet Peter’s eyes, but he refused the eye contact, instead stubbornly keeping his gaze on the ground. He was just beginning to turn towards the kitchen when Thor’s voice froze him in his tracks.

“This omega, Peter, he is very good, is he not, father?”

“Hm, indeed,” Odin’s voice rolled out, soft, measured, controlled. “You, Omega, come here. Tell me, how has my son been treating you?”

Peter swallowed hard, forcing his expression into something humble and respectful, before he turned around, softly asking, “M’lord?”

“My son,” Odin repeated, a little less patient. “How has he treated you?”

Peter blinked, eyes flickering between Loki, Thor, and then back to Odin, the old man’s expression unreadable. Peter licked his lips, completely uncertain of how to reply, however after a very long moment, Peter forced out, “Well, M’lord, he... he has treated me well.”

“Has he now?” Odin hummed, picking up his wine glass and sending a pointed gaze over at Loki as he took a long drink. The other omega’s expression was unequally unreadable, and he did not even twitch under his father’s gaze. “And your training, omega?”

“I... It goes well, M’lord,” Peter confirmed, ducking his head, his heart beginning to hammer.

“He treats you well, and your training goes well?” Odin questioned, leaning forward in his chair. Peter fidgeted with a button on the front of his shirt, nodding. Odin gazed at him for a moment more, before leaning back into his chair, taking another sip of wine, and murmuring, “Perhaps I shall have you visit me in my office. Perhaps I shall need to see your training for myself.”

“M’Lord?” Peter’s voice came out far too much like a whimper.

“Father-“ Loki began, but was quieted with a single wave of Odin’s hand.

“Yes, before the dance,” Odin murmured. “I believe you shall come and visit me in my office, dressed for the ball. I would like to see the results of your training for myself...”

“Odin, do not antagonize the boy.”

The gentle voice startled everyone in the room, but it took only a matter of moments before Loki was scrambling up from his chair and moving towards the door. There, in the doorway, stood a delicate omega woman approximately the same age as Odin. Loki took her arm, helping her over to the empty chair at the head of the table to the right of Odin which Thor was currently pulling out.

“Frigga!” Odin declared in shock, placing his wine glass in the table. “I did not realize you were coming to dinner tonight.”

“I was told I would have the chance to meet my son’s new omega,” the woman smiled, a deep kindness in her eyes that Peter recognized from the eyes of his aunt back in London. “Come here, Peter I believe your name is?”

“Yes, M’lady,” Peter murmured, stepping toward her. He ducked his head, though this time out of some sort of automatic respect rather than fear. There was something noble about her, and something kind, which made Peter instantly like the woman. Her laugh was delicate, but her voice was strong when she spoke again. “Rise, Peter, you need not bow to me.”

“Now, Frigga, we must not put ideas in the omega’s head,” Odin began, but Frigga’s voice was light and she hushed him instantly, waving her hand at the man.

“Nonsense, can’t you see that you’ve already frightened the boy enough? Peter, you’ve no need to

visit my husband's private office. Loki has told me of his teachings with the boy, and I believe he is doing an excellent job, hm?" Frigga gazed over at her son, who ducked his head and murmured a confirmation. She smiled, placing her hand on Odin's and murmuring, "You have nothing to worry about. I'm certain that Peter will impress everyone at the party on Friday. He would impress me, though, if I could get some dinner?"

"Yes, M'lady!" Peter nodded, dashing into the kitchen. He heard something that sounded like bickering in the dining room, but when he returned all was quiet and Frigga thanked him earnestly for the dinner.

"Mother," Thor spoke up. "I for one do very much enjoy the new omega."

"Do you now?" Frigga's eyebrows rose.

"Yes, we had a very interesting conversation yesterday!" Thor confirmed. At the other end of the table, Loki choked, while anger came into Odin's face.

"A conversation?" Odin's dark expression turned up to glare at Peter. "I was unaware that you and the omega ever interacted."

"Oh yes, I found Peter in my-ow! Who kicked me?" Thor frowned, looking around.

"Oh, I'm sorry," Frigga spoke up, sharing a wink with Loki. "Sometimes I do have trouble these days. Now then, I'm glad that you and Peter get along. Perhaps Peter can return to the kitchen now? I'm sure he needs to have his dinner."

"Yes, you may go," Loki spoke up before anyone else got a chance, and Peter scampered from the room.

Molly and Shuri were speaking over by the stove when Peter came back in, and Shuri practically pounced on him the moment he came into the room.

"Is Frigga really at dinner?" Shuri asked, wincing the the cook playfully hit her over the head.

"M'lady Frigga," Molly reminded her. Shuri just rolled her eyes and turned back to Peter.

"Well, is she?" Shuri demanded.

"Er...yes, she is," Peter nodded, licking his lips and looking between the two. "Uh, my name is Peter by the way..."

"I know what your name is," Shuri rolled her eyes again. "As if I haven't heard about you enough. The villagers are glad you were cheap at least, after all the village finances have been stretched thin ever since the drought last year, and with my brother off in London serving as Lord Mayor there is really no one for the people to complain to!"

"Your brother is the Lord Mayor of London?" Peter's jaw dropped in shock.

"Of course," Shuri rolled her eyes as if it was the most obvious thing in the world. "We used to live there until father was... Until we lost father. Then mother and I decided to try the village life, but my brother is far too interested in politics to join us right now. But anyway, I can't believe it, no one sees Frigga anymore! No one except her omega. But then no one sees her omega either. It's been.... months since she last came downstairs!"

"Frigga... She's Odin's wife?" Peter asked slowly.

“Yes, head of the household,” Shuri nodded. “Not that she’s done much to help ever since she got sick.”

“Shuri!” Molly scolded.

“It’s true,” Shuri pointed out. “She was always the person who could help keep Odin from completely going off the deep end! Now he’s a tyrant. Everyone liked Frigga, but about a year ago she got hurt. There were robbers coming into the house! Thor and Odin were on a hunting trip, and only Loki and Frigga were home!

“Apparently the robbers were taking all of the manor’s valuables, and Loki claims to have been... stuck in his room. No one is certain he’s even telling the truth! Anyway, Frigga grabbed the sword, from that suit of armor by the door, and went after them! I guess she scared them off cause they ended up not taking anything, but she got hurt really bad... The doctor was called, and she initially recovered, but then she started getting sick, and now she almost never comes downstairs...” Shuri finished in a hushed whisper.

“Why was Loki stuck in his room?” Peter frowned.

“Dunno,” Shuri shrugged. “Could be lying? No one really trusts that omega, there’s something fishy about him... Or maybe he was in heat, who knows?”

“Shuri,” Molly frowned. “You know you shouldn’t talk so openly about things like that! Especially with....”

“Oh, right,” Shuri gazed at Peter, biting her lip. “You’re an omega, I forgot. And you’ll be taking care of Loki during his heat. I feel bad for you... he started them late, not that long ago, and he’s been in an awful mood for all of them, probably why you came on the scene.”

“I’m... taking care of him when he’s in heat?” Peter blinked. “Oh... that makes sense now. Thor was trying to explain it and he did a terrible job.”

“Of course he did,” Shuri chuckled. “Here’s your dinner, by the way. Hurry, before they make you leave and go to your room!”

Peter smiled, thanking her and then gobbling down the food that tasted fit for a king. Soon the food was gone, and Peter thanked Molly and Shuri earnestly. They seemed to enjoy the praise, but before he turned to go upstairs, Shuri caught his arm.

“Next time I see you will probably be the dance,” Shuri spoke, her voice a hushed murmur. “Take my advice, and just be good. You don’t need to get on anyone’s bad side. Just... pretend. Anyway, good luck.”

And with that, Shuri sent Peter on his way.

Well, what do you think? As always, input is appreciated and I'm open for suggestions! Next chapter.... the ball

Also, my inspiration for the ball room was the Gold Drawing Room of the Winter Palace, you should totally look up pictures because it's beautiful

Also... I know Loki sucks here :/ You'll get to see more of him as the story goes along. As usual, with Loki, everything is as it seems...

Starring Role

Chapter Notes

I've got another long chapter for you! Thanks again to LokisLonkeyLady for checking this chapter over, and I hope you all enjoy the new update!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*It almost feels like a joke to play out a part
When you are not the starring role in someone else's heart
You know I'd rather walk alone, than play a supporting role
If I can't get the starring role*

Thursday passed relatively slowly and left Peter feeling incredibly bored. Loki silently retrieved Peter in the morning, his glares making it very clear that he wasn't in a talking mood. Peter had served breakfast and had even been given some eggs and toast to bring back to his room where he was left until dinnertime rolled around. This time Shuri retrieved him with the information that he would get to serve and eat dinner. Strangely, Loki was not at dinner, but Peter didn't really think anything of it as both Thor and Odin seemed in a grand mood about the upcoming ball. Peter noticed that Frigga was also not at dinner, but it seemed like that was the norm. When Shuri brought Peter back to his room, she seemed apologetic as she handed over a small parcel.

"What's this?" Peter asked her, examining it carefully. It seemed innocent enough, so Peter grinned and playfully asked, "A present for me? You shouldn't have."

"I wish it was a present," Shuri murmured. "But no. It's your clothes, for tomorrow. Odin told me that you should put them on first thing in the morning. I'll be getting you and bringing you to Loki's chambers so you help him get ready. And Peter... Be careful tomorrow? Odin's been in a bad mood since last night."

"He seemed happy enough at dinner," Peter pointed out, but Shuri shook her head.

"Odin is always in a good mood when he's around Thor," she rolled her eyes just a bit. "But I'm just telling you, I could tell. I'll see you in the morning, okay?"

It was easy enough for Peter to nod as he shut the door, gazing at the package for only a moment, before tossing it aside. He could easily deal with it in the morning. For now, Peter just wanted to curl up in bed and get some sleep.

As it turned, Peter could not easily deal with the parcel, or really he just didn't want to. It was past time that Peter would normally be told to serve breakfast, but he was currently far too busy glaring hatefully at his reflection in the mirror. The first thing he noticed about the ensemble was the pants, if they could be called that. They appeared more like stockings to Peter. A long slit went up his right leg, stopping mid thigh, and if it wasn't for the tightness of the material he felt like the pants would flop open revealing far too much. Over top his ruffled, off the shoulder black shirt he wore a burgundy corset (which matched the color of the pants) lined with midnight blue lace. The only reasonable part of his outfit was the little black flats on his feet which were actually half

comfortable. He hadn't quite mustered up the courage to accept what he was wearing, when there was a soft knock on the door. Peter snarled lightly into the mirror, before he turned to open the door, glaring at Shuri.

"I hate it," Peter muttered indignantly. "It's awful."

"Really? I don't think it's half bad!" Shuri's eyebrows shot up. "I've seen much worse at the balls, personally. At least you're not wearing heels, and your chest is covered."

"Sometimes it's not?" Peter practically squealed.

"Usually the boys' aren't," Shuri shrugged as if it was the easiest thing in the world. "Or at least the boys who are other omegas' omegas. No, yours is alright! So, uh, that's the good news. The bad news is I'm here to bring you to Loki. Sorry Peter."

"Not your fault," Peter sighed, taking one last look in the mirror. "Is that what you're wearing?"

"This?" Shuri glanced down at her brown pants and white peasant top. "Of course not, these are work clothes. I have a dress for later since I'll be running around restocking hors d'oeuvres. I'll try and sneak you some if I can, especially since you didn't get any breakfast. Come on!"

Peter grumbled as he was led out of the bedroom and back down the hall. He expected to be led in the direction of Thor's room, but instead he followed Shuri to yet another staircase leading up, and Peter raised his eyebrows.

"This house has a fourth floor?" Peter blinked in surprise.

"It has an attic," Shuri shrugged. "Loki's room was moved there when he started having his heats. Odin said it was safer for him, just in case an alpha is in the house. They won't be able to smell him up there."

"Oh," Peter replied slowly. "That... makes sense, I suppose..."

He swallowed hard as Shuri gestured for him to head up, but he hesitated, raising his eyebrows at her.

"I can't come with you," Shuri pointed out. "Wouldn't be appropriate. No one is allowed in Loki's chambers, except you and his family I suppose. Good luck, I'll see you later."

Peter watched as she disappeared down the hall, his good spirits leaving with her, before he turned toward the rickety stairs. They creaked under his weight, so he hurried up the last few steps before he reached a door. He found he had to swallow a nervous lump in his throat when he knocked twice, and then Loki invited him in.

Peter didn't know what he expected, but it certainly wasn't the drafty attic that met his eyes. He spotted a double bed in one corner, haphazardly pushed next to a window but made up very neatly. He also spotted an open door on the other side of the room which shockingly led to a bathroom with a clawfoot tub visible inside. There was a large armoire, presumably for clothes, and beside it was a lovely vanity where Loki was currently seated. The room was silent for several moments, and Loki observed Peter from the mirror, before he abruptly turned and stood, gazing silently at Peter even as the smaller omega's jaw dropped open.

Loki's eyes were painted with beautiful green eyeshadow, and large, intricate patterns of black eyeliner. A golden crown with two odd horns sat upon his head, sparkling even under the low light of the attic. His hair fell in waves onto his shoulders which were covered by a long sleeve black

and green lace up shirt which dipped into a deep V neck. Peter's eyes were not drawn to the lace tying up Loki's form fitting corset, though. Instead, his eyes lingered on the golden collar around Loki's neck.

"Were you not taught that it is rude to stare?" Loki spat softly. "Come closer, sit, I must arrange your hair and face. I realize you do not have access to makeup in your room, but I thought I did provide you with a comb?"

"You have a collar?" Peter murmured, not moving. Loki snarled, his hand curling into a fist, and a single point at the chair had Peter scrambling to comply. He was surprised when Loki began yanking a comb through his curls, styling his hair up in a quiff.

"I would hit you if hiding the bruise wasn't so difficult," Loki muttered, quickly finishing Peter's hair and moving on to grab eyeshadow. "Close your eyes. Now."

Swallowing, Peter complied, and he flinched a little when Loki got to work.

"Hold still," he was commanded, so Peter sat silently until Loki proclaimed himself done. Peter heard him stepping away, so his eyes fluttered open and his jaw dropped. His eyelids were covered in a shimmering golden red eyeshadow that looked nearly like crushed rubies. Loki was now busy fussing with something in the bathroom, but he came back a moment later, nodding once at Peter. "Yes, you're adequate. I won't require your services getting dressed, obviously. You remember what I taught you?"

"Yes sir," Peter murmured, ducking his head.

"Very good," Loki replied. "Have you eaten?"

"No sir," Peter replied. He was surprised when a moment later an apple was being offered to him, and he took it hesitantly, gazing up at Loki.

"Make sure there isn't anything in your teeth when you're done," Loki told him. "And remember, tonight you will be getting tidbits from alphas' fingers. Do not bite."

"Yes sir," Peter nodded slowly. "Sir... Is this really your room all the time? Even when you're not in heat? Am I... am I not safe in my room?"

Loki gazed at him for a long moment, his face completely unreadable, before he turned abruptly, storming over to the door to the stairs.

"You are to stay here until I fetch you," Loki's voice sounded muffled. "As a reminder of your lessons. Speak only when spoken to, and do not ask questions. I will retrieve you when it is time for the ball."

When the door slammed, Peter almost didn't flinch, and for some reason the apple tasted bitter against his tongue.

When Loki did eventually return, the sun was beginning to set and Peter's stomach was rumbling loudly. Shockingly, he was presented with a bit of bread and ham, and Loki allowed him to finish and examine his teeth before he declared it time to go.

"Be good tonight," Loki murmured. "My father will be evaluating you. And a Mr Stark will be present. My father... announced something tonight, so I suspect that Mr Stark will be playing quite

a role in the ball. You stay away from him, you hear me? Stay away from Stark. But always listen to an alpha's command. Now, one more thing."

Peter nodded shallowly, but froze when Loki took out a long golden leash. Peter's eyes widened as Loki clipped the leash to Peter's collar, yet before he had the moment it would take to complain, Loki was pulling him along behind him. Peter's glare was close to dangerous, but Loki was clearly unconcerned, so Peter stomped along after Loki, down three flights of stairs and toward the jovial music filling the bottom floor of the house. Peter's nose wrinkled slightly when the smell of cigar smoke and strong cologne hit his nostrils, but Loki seemed utterly unbothered as he led Peter past the intoxicating smells of alphas which filled the lively ballroom. Peter spotted both alphas and omegas standing around the room, sipping from champagne flutes and snacking on cheese and crackers. The dance floor was a muted sort of rainbow, the people spinning to the music, long skirts and waistcoats swirling in time to the music. Peter also noticed a few other omegas kneeling around the room, and Peter's eyebrows raised, a little surprised. Somehow he'd been under some kind of impression that Loki was particularly cruel and demanding, but evidently this was a side of being an omega that Peter simply hadn't learned in school.

They were beginning to approach Loki's throne, when their path was suddenly intercepted. Peter's eyebrows raised at the alpha standing in front of them, two beautiful omega women on his arms.

"Hello there, my love," the alpha grinned, tipping his wine glass to Loki, who simply stiffened. The alpha seemed unbothered, and simply winked at one of the girls, who simpered and giggled. "And who is this, now? Surely you can't have picked such a lovely omega to be your lifelong servant, it would be such a waste!"

"This is my omega, Peter," Loki spat softly, his eyes narrowing. "Peter, this is my.... fiancé, Mr Stark."

"Oh please, after tonight's announcement surely we are on a first name basis, hm? Please, Peter, call me Tony," Tony grinned, reaching out and pressing a kiss to Peter's knuckles. When he stood, his eyes twinkled with a sort of devilish merriment, and he raised his eyebrows asking, "Well now, my love, since when did beautiful boys have to go running around on leashes? Surely that isn't necessary."

"I like it," Loki growled.

"I don't," Tony replied. There was a clear glaring match between the two of them, but after a very long moment, Loki unclipped the leash, wrapping it up and putting it in his pocket, but not before he'd given a light warning yank to Peter's collar. Tony rolled his eyes playfully, winking this time at Peter. He then turned to the girls on his arms, declaring, "I'll see you later, alright girls? You know where to find me."

The other two omegas appeared disappointed, but they scampered off, leaving Loki glaring stiffly at Tony. The alpha was clearly unbothered, and he stepped closer to Peter, wrapping an arm around his waist and muttering, "If I'd known sourpuss was going to end up with an omega like you I would've been altogether more excited about getting hitched sometime next year. What do you say you and I dance for a bit. May I, my love?"

"I... I'm... I'm going for a drink," Loki muttered, casting a long look at Peter before storming away. Peter blinked after him, but didn't argue as Tony swept him onto the dance floor. Dancing had always been a strong spot for the omega, and he could tell Tony was impressed by the way his eyebrows tilted up at the end and his hands finished rather close to Peter's waistline, panting.

"You're rather good at dancing," Tony murmured, panting. "Where'd you learn?"

“At my school, Mister Stark, sir,” Peter ducked his head down respectfully. “I attended Oxford’s School.”

“Did you now?” Tony raised his eyebrows. “And how did you end up in the hands of sourpuss?”

“I... M’Lord Loki purchased me,” Peter murmured as they began to sweep into the next dance.

“Oh please, I don’t believe in formalities,” Tony rolled his eyes, his hands roaming lower on Peter’s back. “But I appreciate that little one you came up with. Mr Stark, sir, was it?”

“I... You’re engaged to Loki?” Peter swallowed, carefully changing the subject. Tony chuckled, rolling his eyes when he spoke again.

“Oh yes, Odin announced it today. He spoke with me about it, and I like the old chap. Nothing wrong with Loki either, but I suppose it did come as a surprise. Your omega is hardly the... fun type, but then I’m sure you’ve noticed? Ah well, there’s nothing wrong with settling down, so long as you can have a little fun with it. What do you say you and I escape all the noise here at the party? Escape sourpuss and head out to the gardens somewhere. Might be fun, hm?”

“Why don’t you like Loki?” Peter asked, stubbornly refusing to follow when Tony began to lead him off the dance floor.

“Do you?” Tony laughed easily. “That’s what I thought. Loki is far too concerned with propriety, and he somehow thinks himself above everyone. Now if I could have my way, I wouldn’t bother with all this formality, hm? There’s a reason I’ve never bought an omega. Bought, can you imagine? It’s so entirely backwards. All of this that you see? The kneeling, the titles, this is the past. The future will be so different that people won’t know what hit them. There will be freedom, and machines, and equality. It’ll be paradise. But don’t tell Loki that, he loves titles, hm? I’m sure you’ve had more than enough lessons.”

“So M’Lord Odin arranged for your marriage?” Peter asked slowly.

“Oh yes, he seems to think it’ll be good for Loki, not that I particularly care what’s good for sourpuss. I agreed, though, because marriage seems a logical choice. Of course... that doesn’t mean I wouldn’t drop him if someone else came along, hm?”

Tony winked, before pressing a quick kiss to Peter’s cheek and asking, “I can tell you’re not enthusiastic about going out to the garden, so I think I’ll get some dinner. I’m famished, aren’t you? Come, sit at a table, I’ll bring you some food. If those rumbles in your stomach are anything to go by, Loki isn’t feeding you half as much as he should be.”

This time, Peter consented when Tony lead him off the dance floor, and he raised his eyebrows when he was lead over to a table. The table was already occupied by another couple, and the omega cast a long, serious, sideways glance at Peter that the curly haired boy couldn’t decipher, though it’s intensity made him feel like the other omega was somehow looking into his very essence and finding out things Peter didn’t even know. The omega’s long, dark hair fell in his eyes a moment later, before the omega finally looked away.

“Hello there,” the alpha nodded once, a bit stiffly. He was entirely unlike the omega. While the omega was dark, serious, and a bit foreboding, this alpha could mostly be described as shining and golden. He had shining, golden hair and shining, bright skin and though the suit that he wore was a dark blue it had shining golden pins and buttons on the front. His eyes held a pointed look, though, and once again Peter felt like somehow this alpha knew things about Peter that the boy had yet to discover.

“Hi,” Tony flashed a grin. “There were no other available tables, so I cut my losses and decided to come over here. Peter, this is Steve and Bucky, the dullest company at the ball not including green horn over there...” Tony tossed his head toward Loki at the open bar.

“What makes us dull? Our lack of costume makeup or the fact we don’t try to hook up with every person we come across?” Bucky muttered, his voice incredibly dry and sarcastic, and Peter’s jaw dropped in shock. Of course Peter had his own fair share of dry humor, but never in that tone and certainly not after what Loki had drilled into him about this ball. Steve simply chuckled, though, and rolled his eyes, wrapping an arm around the omega and hushing him gently.

“Darling,” Steve started, but Bucky simply raised his eyebrows skeptically, so Steve began again. “Bucky, come on, this is Odin’s house, you know what that means. Please, just for tonight, or at least in front of Peter here. You are Loki’s new omega, yes?”

“Uh, yes... Sir,” Peter murmured, looking between the odd pair.

“It’s nice to meet you, Peter,” Steve told him honestly. “You can call me Steve, unless Loki comes over and you might want to... amend my title. My name is Captain Steve Rogers.”

“Captain?” Peter asked timidly. “Your accent... are you American?”

“Yes Peter, but I’m stationed over here for private matters,” Steve explained.

“Old Stevie is hoping for a promotion. I hear Thor met you on his visit to the royal guard,” Tony grinned. “You get up close and personal with her majesty yet?”

“If I did, I highly doubt you would be the first to know,” Steve replied smoothly. “So, Peter, how has your time been with Lord Odinson?”

“Um... well... I...” Peter hesitated, licking his lip.

“I’m sorry,” Bucky declared, not truly sounding very sorry at all, though his eyes displayed far more emotion than come through his voice. “Steve and I are typically in London but we spend weekends out here. If you ever need anything, just go down the road to Tony’s estate and tell the guard that I said you can drop by.”

“Inviting omegas over to my estate now, are you?” Tony raised his eyebrows.

“Don’t worry, I’m sure you won’t even notice Peter amongst all the other ones coming and going all the time,” Bucky huffed.

“I... I’m sorry, uh, Sir, but, uh... you are an omega, yes?” Peter murmured, gazing at Bucky curiously. Bucky chuckled, resting his head on Steve’s shoulder as he nodded.

“I suppose anyone would be surprised after spending time around the Odin family. Yes, Peter, I am Steve’s omega, but things are... a little different in America. Not better, necessarily, but certainly different. I’m lucky to have Steve, though, not all alphas believe in omega freedom.”

“Only thing we agree on,” Tony grinned, tipping his glass at Steve, who looked less than amused.

“Sometimes I’m not entirely sure we agree on that,” Steve muttered, eyes landing on the way Tony’s arm curled around the back of Peter’s chair, not quite touching his shoulders. “But yes, Mr Stark is one of the more... foreword thinkings Brits I’ve met.”

“You believe in omega freedom?” Peter suddenly asked in a small voice, gazing up at Tony, who

chuckled, eyes dancing with merriment.

“I already told you I did,” Tony replied. “That’s one of the reasons I’m not overly excited about bringing Sourpuss into my house. We don’t necessarily get on, even if he is beautiful. Oh stop Steve, isn’t a guy allowed to look? Don’t worry Pete, you’re cute too. Anyway, Odin is an old friend of... of my father, and even if my father wasn’t the most lovely of types, I’m doing the right thing. Loki is probably my first good choice.”

“Your father was a genius,” Steve murmured.

“My father was a scoundrel, and a crook, and he thought the world of you, Steve. If I had a pound for every time he spoke of you, I’d be a millionaire twice over. Thankfully, I’m not short on change,” Tony grinned. “See, Pete, I went to boarding school in New York where I met Stevie. Best years of Dad’s life, seeing as I wasn’t running around the manor. Anyway, Pete, yes, I believe in omega freedom. At least soon you’ll be at my Manor but... but you will still be under Loki’s control since you’re, uh, his.”

“I will?” Peter’s face fell.

“Yeah, but don’t worry, I’ll sneak you snacks when he’s not looking,” Tony grinned. He opened his mouth to say something else, when his eyes landed on something on the other side of the room, and his mouth snapped shut.

”Holy alphas,” Bucky muttered, taking a sip from his tumbler. “Good luck Tones, looks like you’ve got some damage control issues.”

Chapter End Notes

Oh no, what do you think happened at the end?! Obviously Tony has arrived, but he is a genius, billionaire, playboy, philanthropist... ;)

I dunno if any of you have noticed the chapter titles, but kudos to anyone who can figure out the reason why I’m naming the chapters the way I am

As usual, I look forward to reading your comments :)

Power and Control

Chapter Notes

So I'm posting this a little early because I won't have time to post it tomorrow. This chapter is pretty short, though, so I'll try to have the next one up before too long
Beta:Lokislonleyleady

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*Give a little, get a lot
That's just how you are with love
Give a little, get a lot
Yeah, you may be good-looking but you're not a piece of art*

Peter turned to see what Tony was looking at, and then his jaw also dropped, and he stared. Yes, Peter knew perfectly well the rudeness of staring, but it was hard to do anything else when he spotted Loki clutched to an odd alpha's chest, dancing much too close. The two of them swayed to the music for a few more moments, before Loki whispered something into the alpha's ear. A grin grew on the alpha's face, and moments later the alpha clumsily pushed Loki up against a wall and began kissing him eagerly. Momentarily, Peter was almost worried, however it slowly dawned on him that Loki was messily kissing the alpha back, which made Peter feel mildly sick to his stomach. The kiss was long, passionate, far too public, and with far too much... noise and tongue action. Peter's stomach rebelled slightly again as Loki rolled his body against the alpha, moaning softly, and more people turned towards the couple, whispering.

"Okay, that's it," Tony spat softly, slowly standing. Peter blinked up at the alpha, his expression a mix worried and confused though his brain hasn't quite caught up with why he should be worried. Besides, Peter had been under the impression that Tony didn't even like Loki. So what was wrong with this? Yes, they were engaged, but Tony had been flouncing around with several omega girls earlier.

Loki is an omega, that's why, a small part of Peter's brain told him. Stubbornly, Peter pushed the thought away.

"Sir, don't you think you should be... careful?" Peter bit his lip as he gazed up at Tony. The alpha's face was beet red, and though it frightened Peter, the boy also felt a little like intervening, though he wasn't certain that he wouldn't go unnoticed. In fact, Peter was almost surprised when Tony did pause, blink, and gaze down at the omega for a moment.

"Stay with Steve and Bucky, Peter," Tony spoke, his voice gentle as he ruffled Peter's hair. "They'll keep you safe if things turn south. And please, you don't have to... do the sir thing. I was joking earlier. Please, you can call me Tony, or Mr Stark, whatever you prefer. I don't care. Anyway, don't worry Pete, I'm not stupid."

"You are, actually," Steve muttered. "But don't be, not this time."

Tony cast a glare at Steve while Bucky sat just a little closer to Peter, his hand inching towards

something hidden clipped to his belt. Tony gazed at the two omegas, before sharing a long look with Bucky.

“Thank you, Bucky,” Tony suddenly spoke. The other omega nodded once, his hand now clasping what Peter suddenly realized was a dangerous looking knife hidden at his hip.

“Of course,” Bucky replied smoothly. “Now hurry up.”

Tony nodded once more thankfully, before he turned to stalk through the crowd of people. Clearly on a mission, Tony marched over to stand next to Loki and the alpha, trying to catch their attention. When that didn’t work, Tony cleared his throat loudly. Loki pointedly ignored him, and Tony had to do it twice more before the other alpha seemed to become aware, pulling away from the omega and raising his eyebrows.

“Oh, hello,” the other alpha smiled, apparently not picking up on any of Tony’s anger. “You needed something?”

“En Dwi,” Tony growled softly. “What do you think you’re doing?”

“Oh, I believe this is called kissing? I realize it may be an unfamiliar concept to you, but I have come to find that omegas are incredibly good at it! Especially this one! And please, you don’t need to get so familiar with names, Grandmaster will do. You’re... Tony Stank, or something like that? Yes yes, I like that, I think that is what I’ll call you. But if you don’t mind, Tony Stank, we were very busy.”

“Yes,” Loki spoke up, still panting against the wall. The curl of his lips into a mischievous little smirk was accompanied by a slight raise of his eyebrows as he added, “Very busy.”

Loki then pulled Grandmaster close and eagerly began kissing him again, raising one knee to the alpha’s hip and pushing closer. The kiss dragged on for several more long moments, yet Loki’s balance was thrown off as Tony this time yanked Grandmaster away, growling softly.

“Look, Liberace, I realize you might’ve missed the FYI earlier, it was only broadcast to the entire ballroom, but Green Boy here and I are engaged,” Tony’s eyes narrowed, looking the alpha’s ridiculous outfit up and down. From his over the top blue makeup, to the updo of his hair, to the golden robes that cascaded down over his bright blue tunic, the man was dressed like something between a mockery of a Roman god and a glorified smurf.

“Oh, congratulations!” Grandmaster beamed, ignoring Loki just long enough to reach over and shake Tony’s hand enthusiastically. Tony wrinkled his nose, wiping his hand on his pants leg when Grandmaster was distracted as he forcefully pulled Loki close with a firm arm around the omega’s waist. Loki made a soft sound of annoyance, glaring at him for only a moment before his enthusiastic lover facade was back in place and he gave Grandmaster a false, idolizing grin.

“I’m sorry I must’ve missed the announcement,” Grandmaster went on, his arm around Loki’s hip sliding lower. “I’m always fashionably late. And besides, I spent the first half of the party upstairs, if you know what I mean.” He winked at Loki, and then waved coyly at an omega across the room.

“To be honest, I don’t care if you spent the first half of the party on Mars. Which, to be fair, would explain why you showed up looking like you’re from another planet. No, what I do care about is letting an Oompa Loompa make moves toward an unwilling omega,” Tony made a grab for Loki, who easily slipped out of his grip and gazed adoringly at Grandmaster.

“Do I look unwilling to you, *my love* ?” Loki asked, his voice sickeningly sweet. Loki batted his

eyelashes several times, and then he turned and pressed a long kiss to Grandmaster's lips. Grandmaster eagerly soaked up the kiss, moaning softly as Loki's hands twisted through his hair.

"Okay, that's it..." Tony growled softly. He was about to pull Loki away, when a loud bang echoed through the room, startling everyone, including Loki who immediately gulped and backed down. He began to step away from Grandmaster, and this time let out a genuine sound of annoyance and displeasure when the alpha wrapped an arm around his waist again, planting a kiss on Loki's temple, evidently ignorant to the glare Loki was casting at him.

The echoes of slow footsteps across the ballroom floor and the parting of the guests were ominous enough, but Peter felt his heart nearly stop when he spotted Odin marching slowly up to Loki. Odin's cane tapped rhythmically with each measured step he took, and a few whispers started up across the room.

"Father," Peter spotted Thor hurrying towards the older man. He pushed through the crowd, worry wrinkling his eyes, but Odin waved his son off dismissively.

"Silence," Odin's voice echoed through the ballroom. The room again fell quiet, and Thor hesitantly paused, swallowing as his eyes met Loki's. It was Loki who broke their gaze, and he wetted his lips nervously when his father's attention turned to be planted solely on him. Loki let out what seemed like an impatient little sigh, though Peter sensed there was something much more urgent in the way Loki's eyes danced from his father, to the floor, and back again.

When Odin spoke, his voice was calm, collected, paternal, but with a distinct edge of warning. "My son, I came to congratulate you and Lord Stark on your engagement, but now I see you with Lord En Dwi Gast? Perhaps there has been some misunderstanding."

"Please, Odin baby, you can call me Grandmaster," the other alpha grinned, extending a hand.

"I can call you whatever I like," Odin spat too softly for anyone else to hear. He pointedly ignored the extended hand and instead leaned more heavily on his cane as he leaned in closer. "Now get away from my son."

"Father-" Thor began again, but he was immediately interrupted by Odin.

"Now," his father growled, his eyes narrowing on the other alpha. There was a short pause during which Grandmaster bit his lips together, gulped, glanced at Loki, and then broke into an abrupt smile.

"Right! Well, I think I can tell when I'm not wanted," Grandmaster beamed, taking it all in stride as he slowly disconnected himself from Loki. "But hey, great party, Odin baby. I look forward to the next one! Hey, omega, write me, my Manor is always open! Especially the part of the Manor where my bedroom is..."

Grandmaster winked, pressing one more kiss to Loki's cheek, not picking up on the way the dark haired omega this time winced, pulling away from the touch. The Grandmaster then swept out of the room, five giggling omegas trailing after him. The room remained silent after he left and Odin turned back to Loki, his gaze now completely dangerous. Loki, however, didn't flinch nor did he back down. Instead, he stood tall and proud, squaring his shoulders and casting an equally hard look back at his father, swallowing once.

"I need to have a word with my son," Odin spoke again, his voice paternal and measured. "Come, Loki."

Odin turned away from Loki, motioning for the omega to follow, yet after a long moment, a single word dropped from between Loki's lips. And that word was, "No."

You could have heard a pin drop in the silence that followed, but instead the only sound was that of Odin slowly turning back towards Loki.

"What did you say?" Odin's voice was just above a whisper.

"You heard what I said," Loki replied, his resolve hardening. "I said, no. No, I won't do that."

Tony swallowed hard, looking between the two and taking a slow step back as Odin approached Loki. Tony almost opened his mouth to say something, but after one glance at Odin it snapped shut again. Odin stepped up to look Loki up and down, calmly examining his son's rebellion, not an inch of emotion on his face. Loki simply glared back, though Peter could see nerves bubbling onto the omega's face, his resolve slowly cracking under his father's stern gaze. This went on for at least a minute, Peter growing more uncomfortable with every passing second. The following slap that echoed through the room made everyone wince, and it made Loki's head snap to the side.

When Loki finally turned his head back to his father, his hair fell into his face, his jaw was clenched tightly, his eyes were red, and he swallowed very hard, clenching his fists and nearly trembling all over.

"Lord Odin," Tony began charismatically, clearly with an intention to intervene, but the look that Loki gave him was so chilling, so angry, that Tony took a stumbling step backwards, growing quiet. His eyes met Thor's, and their gazes seemed to communicate a treasure trove of worry.

"I need a word with my son. I said, come with me," Odin repeated, pointedly ignoring Tony. "Now."

This time, as Odin began to stalk away, Loki bit his lips together and cast a single desperate look around the room. When his eyes locked with Peter's, the younger omega swallowed. Peter watched silently as Loki soaked up his gaze for several seconds, his eyes the only part of Loki that displayed the fear that Peter could practically smell in the air. Their shared gaze continued for a few more seconds, and then ended as suddenly as it had began. Peter found himself slumping, panting lightly, as the omega hurried after his father. Next to Peter, Bucky didn't relax until the ballroom door slammed behind Loki.

Chapter End Notes

So.... Loki has a rebellious side after all. What do you think Odin will do? Next chapter you'll find out...

Buy the Stars

Chapter Notes

So, you'll finally get a chance this chapter to see a bit more of Loki's situation with Odin... Hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*All my life I've been so lonely
All in the name of being holy
Still, you'd like to think you own me
You keep buyin' stars*

The march up to Odin's office on the third floor was silent and tense. Odin took each step slowly, his cane a soft padding noise against the carpeted halls. Loki watched his father with slight concern, reaching out to help once when the man had to stop halfway up the second staircase. For all of Loki's prior anger, and current apprehension, the weary exhaustion on his father's face urged Loki to assist as best he could. Odin refused Loki's care easily enough, waving him off with all the strength of a proud man, his head held high. Still, Loki hurried to open the door to his father's office, pulling out Odin's chair and helping him over to it.

Once he was satisfied that Odin would be alright, Loki hurried to close the door to the study before moving to stand across from his father. Loki held his head high for now, keeping his expression blank, serene, collected. One could easily mistake Loki's expression for mocking, or maybe even apathy, but Odin did not make that mistake. No, it was clear to the man that his son's stomach was twisted in knots as he stood on the other side of the large oak desk. His hands were clasped in front of him, perfectly still as Odin sank into his chair and folded his own hands on the desk, his forefingers steepling.

"My son," Odin's voice was gentle, placating. "Your actions tonight were not acceptable."

"You didn't tell me you were announcing the wedding tonight," Loki swallowed hard, a deep confusion and sadness in his eyes. "You didn't give me any warning, father. You didn't even tell me that you had decided to carry through with the matrimony. Stark.... Lord Stark cares not for me."

"You care for him, do you not?" Odin asked slowly. "I remember when you were a child, always following after the Stark boy, always a little tag along for Tony's and Thor's many adventures. I did not realize why until you presented as an omega. I have seen the way you look at him even now, when you think that nobody is watching you. I know that you care for him."

"He will never love me," Loki replied, his voice strained. "Even tonight he... he went off with other omegas, with my omega, father."

"He will care for you well," Odin's voice was measured. "Did you not see the lovely wedding gifts he presented for you this evening? Jewelry for you made of gold, silver, and rhinestones. He will provide you with a comfortable life. Whether or not he loves you is irrelevant, so long as you are safe, with a roof over your head. I want the best for you, my child, and I trust Lord Stark to provide that."

"I am not even your child," Loki spat softly. "Why should you care for me?"

"Loki, you are my son. I took you in as a wee babe, out of the goodness of my heart, when your mother was taken by sickness and your father was lost in London," Odin murmured. "Everything I have done for you has been for your own good. I have tried so hard by you Loki, and yet you continue to disappoint me."

"Father, I-"

"But I have hope for you yet," Odin murmured, shaking his head at his son. "I truly believe that you yet have the power within you to become a proud, honorable omega, and that will happen when you wed Lord Stark."

"But he doesn't care for me," Loki argued weakly. "I just... tonight, I saw him father, I saw him kissing another omega after the announcement! He cares not for me! I simply.... I simply wished to show him, father. To show him what he does to me when he does that. What he does to our family! Is it not a disgrace to the name of Odin to have him kissing omegas when he is promised in marriage?"

"There is a difference between you and Lord Stark, Loki," Odin murmured. "Stark is an alpha of noble blood. You, Loki, are not. Only one of you disgraced this house tonight."

"But..." Loki licked his lips, his chest sucking in a shaking breath, yet he was interrupted.

"I want the best for you Loki, that is all I want. I only want you to have somewhere to go. You are of age now, and you know that you cannot stay here forever. You are my son, but you are not my blood. If you were, perhaps I... perhaps I could arrange for something, but the world knows that I took you in as a child, and it is not appropriate for you to stay here any longer. Soon your elder brother will have a pretty young omega of his own, and by that point you must be gone. I do not want you on the streets, my child, I want you to be cared for and safe. And Lord Stark will give you that," Odin sighed softly, closing his eyes for just a moment.

"I have raised you to be the perfect omega, to be the noble I wish you were, and now I have arranged a noble wedding for you," Odin went on quietly. "Please Loki, do not destroy the bond with Stark that I have forged for you. You have been so good for so many years. The world can yet overlook your transgression tonight. Please my son, you can yet make me proud."

Loki swallowed hard, eyes shining with moisture, but he blinked twice and it was gone.

"Yes father," Loki whispered, ducking his head. "I... I am sorry. I just... I thought I could make him care for me. I thought I could..."

"I did not arrange your marriage for love," Odin murmured. "I am sorry, but not all things are possible. I arranged this marriage so that my only omega son would be safe, and would have a good home."

"Yes father," Loki murmured.

"And Loki," Odin added, a frown growing on his face. "Your omega, Peter? I saw him sitting with Stark."

"Yes father?" Loki paled, his hands beginning to tremble. "I trained him, I did. He is obstinate, it's true, but I have not been soft. I made his station very clear. I told him to stay away from Lord Stark-"

“I do not mind Lord Stark becoming fond of your omega. It may work to strengthen your marriage with him. Perhaps if Stark cares for Peter, then it is best to allow him to... remain by Stark’s side. You and Peter are legally bound, and Peter is not able to wed a noble alpha as you are. Your privilege outweighs his, and should Stark care for Peter he may only have him if he has you as well,” Odin tipped his head just slightly. Loki blinked, his face going white, and then red.

“Peter is my omega! Father, I bought Peter, with my own money! With the money I had been saving up for years! Father, you said that all nobility has the right to an omega, that I had the right to one if I could buy one with my own money. And I did father, that was my money, the money I had collected and saved and-“

“Here,” Odin reached into his desk drawer, bringing out a large handful of cash and placing it in front of Loki. “Buy something else, perhaps something to make yourself more beautiful. Perhaps then Lord Stark will not care as much for Peter and you may have your omega back. If not, then think of Peter as your engagement gift to Lord Stark. All omegas are replaceable, you can save up your money for another one. Now, you have your money. I know one day you will make me proud, and when you do, my door will open to anything that you should need. Until then, run along. I must return to see how your brother fares at the party. I am eager to see him, for I know at least he will ease an old man’s aching heart. And remember, I love you, my son.”

Loki breath came in small huffs, a large lump in his throat. He licked his lips, opened and closed his mouth, and then took the money with a shaking hand.

“Yes father,” Loki’s voice was a whisper. “I’m sorry, father, for tonight, I... I will do better I... I... Thank you, father. I’m sorry. I...”

Odin leaned forward across the desk, raising his eyebrows until Loki spoke again, in a whisper.

“I love you too, father,” Loki murmured.

“Good, now run along my child,” Odin murmured. “Go do as you will for the rest of the night. I want this to be a good night for you, after all, it is your engagement night. Oh, and my son? The champagne cellar will remain unlocked tonight, should Lord Stark ever wish to toast to your wedding as is customary, though I would not be... disappointed if he chooses not to.”

“Yes father. Thank you father,” Loki whispered, his eyes shining with tears.

“And Loki,” Odin added as his son began to stand. “Did you not like the clothes I suggested for Peter?”

“I... I thought Lord Stark would prefer the ones that I purchased,” Loki swallowed hard. “I have been watching how the omegas he spends time with dress and they’re usually not as exposed as the clothes you provided me with for Peter and-“

“This is my ball, not Stark’s,” Odin’s voice was measured. “Next time, you provide your omega with the clothes that I deem appropriate. You have done well listening to my suggestions for yourself, my child, but you must do so for Peter as well. It is because I care for you that I give you these suggestions. You know that.”

Something akin to anger flashed across Loki’s face, his eyebrows drawing together, but he quickly relaxed his expression.

“Yes father,” Loki whispered. “Thank you.”

When his father dismissed him with a wave of his hand, Loki hurried from the room. He paused

only long enough to close the door behind himself before he stumbled down the hall until he reached the staircase to the attic. He managed three steps before he stumbled, gasping. Loki clasped at the wall for several moments for balance, his fist trembling, before he slowly slid to the ground. There he curled into a small ball at the foot of the stairs, his whole body shaking with sobs that echoed through up to the empty attic and back down again, unheard by the guests at the cheerful party downstairs.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks again for your comments, they definitely keep me inspired and writing. I've decided on how I'm going to handle some of the side characters who will be showing up in future chapters (such as Steve and Bucky) plus next chapter will have a bit more Peter and Loki interaction

Shampain

Chapter Notes

Warning for brief reference to suicidal ideation. Also warning for abuse coming from someone under the influence of alcohol.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Drinking champagne, meant for a wedding

Toast to the bride, a fairy tail ending

Drinking champagne, a bottle to myself

Savor the taste of fabricated wealth

When the morning rays of sunlight finally hit Peter's eyes, he groaned softly, rolling over in bed and trying to pretend like it wasn't time to get up. He could only ignore his duty for just so long, though, so with a sigh Peter pulled on clothes while his mind wandered. Last night had been... odd to say the least. On the easily accessible, top layer of his mind, the ball had actually been lovely for Peter. Steve and Bucky had both been amazing. Steve treated Peter like an actual human, and Bucky was like an enigma, shining brightly for Peter to trail after and attempt to replicate because quite honestly Peter had never met an omega quite like him. And then, of course, there was Mr Stark.

Mr Stark, or Tony as the man asked to be called, was not at all like Steve. Where Steve had a gentle humanity about him which urged Peter to feel as though he wasn't so different from the alpha, Tony gave off a frightening intensity. His true thoughts were hard to decipher for he claimed he wanted equality, but then spent half the night making eyes at omegas. Of course, he backed off of Peter the moment the boy seemed uninterested, and resorted to chatting with Peter quite openly. Even then, though, Peter felt like he had to be careful around the man because, although Tony seemed genuinely kind and interested in what Peter had to say, he also had a strange, flippant way about him as if maybe nothing truly mattered and he was ready to jump headfirst into a risky situation and bring anyone and everyone with him. There was something appealing about his devil may care personality, but it also made Peter uneasy because he didn't have that sort of wiggle room in his current 'station' as Loki called it.

But then again, Tony had garnered some respect from Peter last night as well. After the Loki situation had transpired, Tony had exchanged words with Thor and then marched back to the table with a troubled look on his face which gave Peter pause. When asked about it, Tony laughed and threw the questions to the wind, yet Peter could easily see the worry sitting just behind the man's eyes. Yes, perhaps Tony half despised Loki, but the new found concern about the omega's well being gave Peter some insight that told him that perhaps Tony wasn't quite as raucous as the man let on. Of course then Tony had drowned his cares in several glasses of liquor, but most alphas did.

By the end of the night, Tony was more than a little drunk and Steve had had to half drag him towards the door. Normally Peter didn't bat his eye at what alphas said when they were drunk, but last night was different. Before Tony left, he'd paused and placed a hand on Peter's shoulder (maybe so he didn't topple over) and told Peter in a very earnest voice that there would always be an open room for him at Stark Manor in case he ever needed somewhere to go. Peter usually would not believe the word of a drunk man, but then Bucky and Steve agreed and slipped Peter directions

as to where to find the manor. Peter had hidden the slip of paper under his pillow last night, and now he took it out and stared at it, running his thumb over it and letting the implications of the invitation sink in.

When someone knocked on his door a few moments later, Peter stuffed the paper under his old mattress and stood, ducking his head. For some reason, Peter's heart felt like it would beat clean out of his chest because, despite the top layer of his mind saying that the ball had been lovely, he knew the truth was that it wasn't. Ever since the Loki incident there had been a small itch at the nape of Peter's neck. The look in Bucky's eyes had been enough to tell Peter to worry about what might happen to Loki. Of course Peter didn't care about his ill mannered 'master' but that didn't stop him from feeling concern creeping up his back at the way Loki's eyes had locked on his own last night, pleading for help that Peter couldn't give him.

Strangely, Peter almost wanted Loki to hurry up and barge in if only so that Peter could confirm that he was fine. Then the boy could go back to hating the omega that placed him into forced servitude. Instead of Loki coming through, though, it was Shuri, and Peter slumped.

"Oh," Peter murmured. "It's you."

"Hello to you too," Shuri rolled her eyes. "Who were you expecting, the Queen? If so, here I am!"

"No, sorry," Peter chuckled softly, relaxing against his bed frame. "I just thought it was Loki."

"Why, do you want to see Loki?" Shuri raised her eyebrows.

"No!" Peter replied just a bit too quickly. "I just... figured it was him."

"Oh," Shuri nodded slowly, blinking. "Well, believe it or not I'm actually here to take you to take you to him so... you weren't completely wrong. Hey, Peter, you okay? Did something happen last night that I don't know about?"

"I don't know, did you see what happened to Loki?" Peter bit his lip. "It's not like I care about him or anything, but I am a little worried..."

"Oh that," Shuri rolled her eyes again. "Loki is fine."

"Really?" Peter asked hopefully.

"Yeah, I mean he's Loki! Loki is always fine. He's Odin's little princess, it's not like his father would do anything to him. Yeah yeah, I know he... slapped him, and that was awful, but Loki had it coming didn't he? I mean, he's slapped you before right? He does that, you know, to other omegas. Thinks he's better than anyone, maybe better than some alphas, and it's because Odin feeds those ideas to him. It's not like Odin would turn around and hurt him. No one likes Odin, but he's not... a monster. Seriously, don't worry Peter. Hey, did you see my brother there last night?" Shuri suddenly changed the subject, growing excited. Peter shook his head, eyes wide.

"No, he was there? You said he's the Lord Mayor of London right?" Peter asked excitedly. "I can't believe he was there last night..."

"Of course he was there," Shuri chuckled. "He's at all of Odin's events. Can't have a proper ball without all the proper nobles now can you?" Shuri jokes easily. "Better yet, he wants to meet with you Peter!"

"He... he does?" Peter asked slowly. "Why?"

“Why? Who cares why!” Shuri beamed. “Aren’t you excited? Odin is sure to say yes and it’ll get you out of the house for a little while, or at least away from Loki.”

“Yeah but.... Shuri, what is he?” Peter asked, wincing when Shuri raised her eyebrow at him.

“Uh, the Lord Mayor of London, that’s what,” Shuri rolled her eyes.

“No, sorry, I just meant... like, is he an alpha?”

“Well... yeah, but what does that have to do with anything?” Shuri asked.

“It’s just... sorry, at my school I had alphas ask to see me before, for no apparent reason, and it usually turns out... poorly,” Peter sighed. “Sorry, but I’m not a huge fan of making out with alphas I’ve never met. It’s... not my thing.”

“Hey, my brother is not like that,” Shuri frowned. “He’s not, I swear. In fact, he’s really for omega rights. That’s... that’s probably why he wants to see you. Because he saw you hanging around Bucky at the party last night.”

“What’s Bucky have to do with anything?” Peter asked. “Hey, Shuri, everything okay?”

“Yeah, it’s just... look, I’m not sure I should tell you everything, but basically Bucky and my family don’t really... get along. See, remember how I said something happened to my dad? Yeah, he was the Lord Mayor of London before my brother and... he kind of got.... got murdered. By a vigilante.”

“What?” Peter’s jaw dropped. “Oh my gosh, Shuri, I’m so sorry...”

“And people think that vigilante was Bucky,” Shuri went on when Peter interrupted her.

“What? But.... no way, that can’t be right,” Peter spoke slowly, a frown growing on his face. “No way... Isn’t Bucky with Steve? And Steve would never be with someone who... who did something like that! Steve is in the army.”

“Well... see Bucky was never found guilty, and he and Steve both claim his innocence. They never did find the culprit but.... But look, just be careful around Bucky, okay? He’s dangerous, especially for omegas.”

“Why?” Peter’s eyebrows drew together.

“I don’t know if I should be telling you this but... but look, my family is for omega rights, we always have been. My father, my brother, they both marched toward the same aim, omegas having equality, but true diplomacy is an art, and it takes time, sometimes years before there’s a change. Bucky... Bucky is also famous for supporting omega rights, but his methods are more.... Immediate, and dangerous. See, he’s attacked alphas before, never killed them but.... but he’s hurt alphas that stand against omegas, even got put in jail for it for a while. He’s also... one time he starved himself as an act of protest, another time he threw himself in front of a noble’s horse because news got out that the noble was beating his omega. And look, the thing is, Bucky has his heart in the right place! I agree that omegas are equal, it’s just.... sometimes I wonder if he doesn’t make it all worse, and... and he was caught just a block away from where my dad was murdered. He had no weapon on him but... please, just be careful Peter, please?”

“I... Yeah, yeah I will, thanks,” Peter murmured, his voice quiet. “Um, maybe we can go to Loki now?”

“Yeah, of course, follow me. Boy, I never knew you to be so excited to see Lord Loki,” Shuri chuckled softly, rolling her eyes. Peter swallowed hard, shrugging.

“Me either,” Peter whispered.

As usual, Shuri dropped Peter off at the foot of Loki’s stairs, squeezing his shoulder for a bit of moral support. Peter forced a smile at her before he began his trek up the steps. He felt nervous and winded by the time he reached the top step. Still he was quick to knock on Loki’s closed door. For several moments there was no answer, but then an odd sounding, not quite recognizable voice asked who it was, so Peter introduced himself. There was a long pause, and Peter almost wondered if Shuri had been wrong and he wasn’t supposed to be brought to Loki, but moments later the door opened, and Peter’s jaw dropped.

Loki was... a mess. He hadn’t changed out of his clothes from last night, and his hair now hung in greasy, messy clumps around his face which was smeared in mascara stains. A champagne bottle hung out of his left hand while his right clutched at the door frame to keep him from toppling over when he stumbled slightly. Loki’s breath smelled of alcohol, and Peter wrinkled his nose slightly as Loki continued to stand there, silently breathing into his face.

“Uh, Sir?” Peter finally spoke, swallowing hard. “Uh, you wanted to see me?”

“No,” Loki’s voice was a gravelly growl when he spoke, his eyes narrowed. “No, that was father. Father wanted you to see me.”

“Should I... should I leave?” Peter tried not to whimper as Loki crowded into Peter’s personal space, cornering him at the edge of the stairs. Loki peered past him, over the edge of the railing, and then he chilled Peter to the bone as he began to chuckle, a frightening, deranged sort of sound.

“Wouldn’t it be easy?” Loki murmured, ignoring Peter’s question completely as he leaned clumsily closer to the railing. “To just... fall? It would be so easy...”

“Whoa, whoa careful!” Peter cried as Loki stumbled and slipped, indeed almost toppling over the railing. Peter managed to pull him back, but not before the champagne bottle slipped from between his fingers and shattered on the ground far below. Loki laughed more genuinely this time, peering down at the shards of glass and drink that were now splattered over the ground below them, and again a shiver traveled up Peter’s spine and he swallowed hard. “Hey, hey Loki come on, come on you should... you should get in bed...”

Peter winced, closing his eyes tightly in preparation for the hit that echoed through the stairwell. When Peter forced his eyes open, Loki’s were angry, bubbling, and hostile under the low light.

“How dare you presume to tell me what to do, omega,” Loki snarled. “You’re mine, my omega, I tell you what to do!”

Peter let out a soft cry when Loki hit him again, and again, until Peter whimpered and curled into a little ball at the edge of the stairwell, trembling. The assault immediately stopped, and Peter peaked up to see Loki kneeling beside him, his eyes now filled with apparent concern. Loki’s hands, however, hovered just over Peter’s reddened skin, trembling. When Loki’s eyes met Peter this time, there was a frightening level of apology and compassion in them, and then quite suddenly Loki stood and stumbled back into his room, trying to flop onto the bed but ending up falling to the floor instead. His body was limp and silent for a moment, before suddenly his shoulders began to shake violently with sobs, the sound forlorn as it echoed around the drafty room. Peter slowly

picked himself up, swallowing hard as he approached Loki's body.

"Sir?" Peter whimpered.

"Please," Loki's voice was just above a whimper. "Just go away. Please, please just go away."

Peter surveyed Loki, and then the state of the room, and Peter swallowed hard. For the first time he noticed that the room was in disarray. The curtains at the window had been ripped to the ground, and the drawers on the vanity lay scattered around the room, painted in bits of colorful eyeshadow, the empty palette broken in half by the bed. Several bottles lay empty, sparkling under the dull sunlight, reflected in the shards of glass from Loki's broken mirror. Swallowing hard, Peter moved to kneel beside Loki, and he shook his head.

"No, I won't," Peter's voice was just above a whisper. "I'm not leaving you here like this, Lord Odinson. I'm not."

"I told you to go away!" Loki roared. He shot up into a sitting position and pointed adamantly at the door. Peter flinched, scampering backwards in a sort of a crab walk. He panted, watching Loki with frightened eyes, but when Loki didn't move from his position, Peter swallowed hard and shook his head.

"No," Peter gulped. "Please I... I can't. I won't leave you like this. I... I can't. I-I'm sorry."

Loki hesitated, trembling slightly as he lowered his arm, blinking at Peter with wide, confused eyes.

"Why?" Loki's voice was hoarse as he asked the question, searching Peter's eyes for understanding.

"Because... because I- I'm worried about you," Peter admitted. "I can't leave you like this. I... I'm sorry, about everything, and I... I'm sorry."

"I'm fine, I swear to you, I am fine," Loki spat softly. "You needn't concern yourself with my well being."

"I thought that was my job," Peter murmured softly. "To concern myself with your well being."

Loki huffed, looking to the side and pressing his lips together for a moment. He took a deep breath in, then let it out, and then murmured, "Not for much longer."

"What... what do you mean?" Peter murmured, his eyebrows furrowing.

"Stark cares for you?" Loki spat softly. "Don't lie to me Peter. He cares for you, doesn't he? *Doesn't he ?*"

"I... I don't know, Sir," Peter whimpered, flinching back again as Loki raised his hand, but belatedly Loki seemed to notice what he was doing, and he instead used his outstretched hand to push himself up until he was sitting on the edge of the bed. Peter shifted uneasily, still kneeling. He felt his skin prickle as he blinked up at the other omega, an angelic sort of innocence to his nervousness, and Loki sighed, patting the spot on the edge of the bed beside him.

"Please, sit," Loki muttered, looking away again. "Stark... my engagement to Stark is purely professional. Stark is brilliant, a genius, truly he is one of the best alphas that you will meet, and if he cares for you then all the better I suppose. We... we will be moving in with Stark after the wedding, and... and then I will no longer require your services during my... during... when I...

Stark should take those needs, but you will still be-uh-be with me. So if he cares for you and you him, then all the better. I don't... I don't wish you to be unhappy Peter. No one deserves to feel... to feel..."

"As you do?" Peter ventured bravely. He expected a hit, or at least a glare, but instead Loki clutched his hands in his lap and turned away, shutting his eyes and ducking his head. Peter sighed, chewing the inside of his lip, utterly unsure of what to do next. Loki was now silent, his shoulders didn't shake, but Peter could see silent tears dribbling down the other omega's sharp cheeks. Slowly, oh so slowly, Peter crept forward again, easing himself onto the edge of the bed beside Loki.

"I already told you, I'm fine," Loki finally spoke after several minutes of vaguely uncomfortable silence. "You need not worry about how I feel. Feelings are for children who have not yet outgrown the stories their mothers used to tell them at night."

"Good thing I never had a mother to tell me stories, then, hm?" Peter quipped softly, before biting his lips, his eyes widening. Loki, who seemed to have recovered from his earlier outbursts, now turned to raise an eyebrow at Peter. Gulping, Peter took a deep breath to calm himself when he spoke, licking his lips. "Uh, sorry. Humor, I guess it's a force of habit. It wasn't a very good joke though, was it..."

Loki let out a single, half amused huff, before asking, "Is there such a thing as a bad joke?"

It took several moments before the small smirk on Loki's face registered, but when it did Peter broke into the smallest of smiles.

"I suppose not... Sir!" Peter belatedly added the title, causing Loki to smirk slightly and huff again, before he yawned widely, swaying just a bit. Peter hesitated, nervous about suggesting anything to the other omega, and he focused on fiddling with his hands as Loki yawned a second time. Peter knew that maybe it wasn't his place, but as Loki sat there, his eyes fluttering open and closed, Peter murmured, "Sorry, I was just wondering... How old you?"

"Hm? Oh... nineteen, I think. Hard t'know, I guess, since father didn't," Loki yawned. "Didn't know exactly when I was born. Could be eighteen, could be twenty. Why?"

"Oh, no reason, I just... wondered," Peter murmured. "I didn't know you were... my age. I thought maybe you were older. You seem older. And Mr Stark seems.... older."

"Stark is just a little older than my brother," Loki muttered. "He's about the age of my brother. Twenty three, twenty four, twenty five, I dunno..."

Loki began to curl up against his pillow, mumbling something Peter didn't understand as his eyes fluttered closed. Frowning, Peter asked, "I'm... I'm so sorry, I didn't catch that?"

"Need t'sleep," Loki mumbled, already starting to doze. Loki mumbled something else unintelligible, but Peter didn't bother to ask what it was. Instead he watched as Loki's breaths evened out, the signal that he had indeed fallen asleep. He was silent in sleep and perfectly still, like a statue. Somehow he looked more like himself now that the anguish lines on his face from earlier had evened out into a peaceful palate. He looked every bit as regal as he had down at the ball, and it was almost easy to look past the smeared makeup and greasy hair to see a face of nobility.

For just a moment, Peter almost considered using this as an escape. He considered leaving Loki here to sleep it off so that Peter didn't have to be anywhere near the other omega, but as Peter

stood, he felt guilt twist in his gut. Loki made a soft noise in his sleep, his hair falling in his face, and Peter sighed deeply, running one hand through his own curls.

Not only had Odin evidently ordered Peter up here (and after seeing Loki's condition Peter was in no hurry to get on Odin's bad side) but also it felt inherently wrong somehow to dash off when Peter wasn't entirely sure that Loki wouldn't wake up and throw himself out a window. So, despite one small part of Peter that wished desperately that he could run down the stairs and into the safety of his own room, Peter turned and tucked the single, thin blanket on the bed up to Loki's neck. The dark haired omega made another soft noise which made Peter pause nervously, but thankfully Loki didn't wake up. Peter searched for more blankets, feeling sure that there must be more than the one to keep Loki warm in this cold, drafty attic, but if there were more they were not anywhere that Peter could see. Loki shivered just a bit, his body trembling slightly as he curled up more under the blanket, but there wasn't anything Peter could do to help, so he bit his lip and backed off.

Once Peter was satisfied that Loki was tucked into bed and truly asleep, Peter sighed and went about cleaning up the glass fragments from Loki's mirror. He carefully put all of the glass in a little pile in the corner since he didn't see a garbage. He also cleared the room up a bit just for something to keep his mind occupied. He put the drawers back in place, discarded the broken eyeshadow palette with the broken glass, and righted a chair that was on its side. Once there didn't appear to be anything else to keep him busy, Peter plopped down in the corner of the room. He fiddled with his hands, trying to come up with a mind game to keep himself entertained. But, ultimately, Peter's mind simply wandered off, thinking of his aunt starving in London. He thought of the money he had promised he would deliver to her after he married an influential alpha, and he thought of how she might worry now that not only had he not sent money, but he also had not written to her since he left his school. Sighing, Peter rested his head back against the wall and closed his eyes, willing his mind to think, plan, and plot.

Chapter End Notes

Since the last chapter was pretty short I wanted to get this one out this weekend. What do you all think of the Loki and Peter interaction? Loki... is not having a good time :/ I'll be introducing some of the characters better next chapter such as T'Challa and Bucky so that's what you have to look forward to :)

Are You Satisfied?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

*Are you satisfied with an average life?
Do I need to lie to make my way in life?*

*High achiever, don't you see?
Baby, nothing comes for free
They say I'm a control freak
Driven by a greed to succeed
Nobody can stop me*

Peter grew quickly tired of waiting, and his stomach grumbled angrily at him as the morning sun rose in the sky. Still, Peter enjoyed the warm rays of the early afternoon heating up the room, despite the way his stomach ached. Just as Peter began considering sneaking out to grab a snack, a soft noise from the bed caught his attention, and he paused, glancing over as Loki curled up under his blanket, groaning.

Peter froze, pulling one knee to his chest as he sat under the attic window, watching as Loki uncurled, grumbled, sat up, and froze. The two omegas observed each other silently for several moments before Loki spoke, his voice more nervous than dangerous.

“What are you doing in my room?” Loki demanded softly. “Why are you here?”

“I... your father told me to come up here, remember? Or maybe you don’t. You were... I think you drank a lot last night,” Peter gestured to the small pile of bottles in the corner. “Your father asked me to come up here?”

Loki looked to the bottles and blinked three times, rubbing his head and pressing his lips together. It was clear when realization shown on his face, and Loki swallowed hard, nodding once.

“Oh,” Loki murmured. “I... yes, of course. I remember...”

“Are you alright?” Peter murmured. “Does your head hurt? I can get you water, or anything really. And... just, are you okay? Earlier you, uh... Well, I mean, I’m here if you need to talk, or—”

“I’m fine,” Loki snapped, eyes flashing at Peter. “I don’t need to talk with anyone. Whatever I said last night, this morning, it didn’t mean anything. Last night I... I was just celebrating my engagement and I got a little carried away.”

“Celebrating?” Peter’s eyebrows rose skeptically despite himself. “Looked more like drowning.”

“It doesn’t matter,” Loki snapped again, eyes dark eyes studying Peter clinically. “You couldn’t possibly hope to understand.”

“I... Perhaps I can,” Peter murmured, chewing his lip. “Like I said, if you need to talk I... I am here. You said something, before, about wanting to.... To jump off the stairs and then you said something about not requiring my services any more soon and.... Well I... I just wanted to make sure you’re alright? That you’re not about to actually, you know, jump off your stairs...”

Panic flashed in Loki's eyes for a moment, before he narrowed them, a dangerous look coming into his eyes.

"Get out," Loki spat at Peter. "Get out of my room. How dare you suggest I would consider such a thing? You're wrong! Get out! You don't know anything, you simple child! You don't understand a thing! Get out!"

"Understand what? That you're marrying Lord Stark and you're taking it all for granted? As if it's a bad thing? No, I don't understand," Peter suddenly replied bravely, eyes flashed despite himself. His head hurt and his stomach ached and Peter felt a shiver run through his body as a cloud moved to cover the sun. Loki's expression was both panicked and angry, though Peter didn't miss the way Loki's eyes squinted slightly and he rubbed his head again.

"For granted," Loki growled, shaking his head. "Yes, well I suppose I should be overwhelmingly happy to be wed to a rich alpha who considers his fiancé to be no more than a nuisance, who will never show love and who believes money is the solution to all problems. I suppose I should be happy that my father claims to care about this marriage for more reasons than the dowry he will receive from Stark once our vows are said."

"I would be happy. At least a rich alpha would be better than this," Peter muttered softly enough that he believed Loki couldn't hear. Unfortunately, Loki did seem to hear for he looked up, eyes dark.

"I told you to get out of my room," Loki stood, leaning against the wall when he swayed dangerously. "I didn't ask you to come here or to sympathize with me. I never asked you to understand. I don't want your pity, I don't want your sympathy, and I don't want your judgement. Perhaps you idolize the idea your school planted in your head of marrying a rich alpha and becoming someone's plaything. Perhaps I should simply pretend that I, too, desire only to stand beside a rich alpha, bat my eyelashes, and act as though I haven't a thought in my head. Perhaps life would be so incredibly easy if, instead of wishing to have a moment of personal success, one simply wished to feel the success of a happy marriage with an alpha while you are bred like nothing more than a prized stallion. Perhaps that is all I desire, or perhaps not, but either way my feelings, my desires, are mine to bear. It's my business, not yours. Didn't they fill you in on all the gossip at the ball last night? Haven't you heard about me? I am driven by greed and a need for control despite my place as an omega. Didn't you hear the rumors that I think I'm better than everyone. Do you really suppose someone like me would require the help of someone like you?"

Peter glared silently at Loki, hands balled into fists. Loki almost swayed again, but he winced and caught himself, squeezing his eyes shut when the sun came back out and lit up the room. Peter swallowed hard, once, before he summoned up the bitterness growing inside his chest and softly muttered, "Fine. I'll go. I don't want to stick around here anyway, but you're wrong. You're wrong to think that my school made me idolize anything. You're wrong about that. I just... I just wanted to help. But fine. I guess I was wrong to want to help you."

Peter squared his shoulders when Loki's lips pressed into a thin line and the older omega flinched lightly. The room was silent for several long moments, before Loki gave a single nod.

"Go get breakfast," Loki suddenly declared. "Or lunch, or whatever meal we're at. Go."

"For you?" Peter snapped, frowning at Loki.

"No, for you. I'm not hungry, but you are," Loki replied as if it was most obvious thing in the world. "And don't come back. I don't want to see you again."

Peter swallowed, biting his lip. He looked Loki up and down, trying not to look too confused, before he nodded slowly.

“Thank you,” Peter’s voice was just above a whisper, but Loki simply scoffed.

“Do not thank me,” Loki muttered. “Now get out. Now! Go.”

Peter tried not to jump as he hurried to do as he was told, dashing down the stairs to get some food in his grumbling, aching stomach. He ignored the groan from the attic as Loki collapsed back into bed and instead shut the door firmly behind himself, as if perhaps that could prevent the other omega from throwing himself off the staircase.

The halls of the manor were blessedly empty so Peter was able to sneak into the kitchen unnoticed. He was pleasantly surprised to find a bowl of fruit on the table, so he grabbed an apple and a slice of bread with cheese before curling up in the pantry to devour his meal. Peter was far too hungry to feel concerned about any consequences he might face if caught, and besides Peter had become incredibly good at sneaking food away from his school when he’d had kitchen duty. Once finished, Peter crept out into the dining room, and then immediately jumped.

“Oh!” Peter swallowed hard. “I’m sorry, I didn’t realize we had guests, or that you were there, or... anything. I’m sorry.”

“Not to worry, I am simply having a small meal in preparation for my journey back to London. You must be Peter? Shuri said she was having a hard time finding you, if only she had known you, too, were eating?” The alpha sitting at one end of the long table had a gentle, amused smile in his eyes. He was dressed formally and carried himself with the air of a noble, and Peter realized with a start who this must be.

“You’re Shuri’s brother, aren’t you? I’m so sorry, M’lord, I didn’t realize you were looking for me. I’m so sorry,” Peter bowed quickly, but the man simply smiled and chuckled, shaking his head.

“Please, there is no need for that,” the alpha reassured Peter. He then gestured to the chair beside him, instructing, “You may call me T’Challa. Please, sit Peter, I wish to speak with you.”

Peter swallowed hard, sitting tentatively at the chair beside the alpha and trying not to fidget. The man seemed to notice Peter’s nervousness for he offered another kind smile, declaring, “Thank you, Peter. I spotted you at the ball last night and simply wanted to speak with you before traveling back to London. Firstly, I wanted to thank you for being a friend to my sister. My mother and sister left London for the safety of the countryside after my father’s demise, leaving all of my sister’s friends behind in the city. Shuri took this job as a way of staying occupied, but I am glad that you can provide her with kinship while she works. Now, secondly, I have a more serious matter. I realize you are Loki’s omega, yes?”

“Yes,” Peter murmured softly, averting his eyes. “I am.”

“Has he been treating you right?” T’Challa asked. It felt like a trick question and only made Peter more nervous, so he nodded and offered a noncommittal sound, which made the alpha’s brows draw together in concern. “I see. Well, I wished to tell you that I realize that Loki can be... harsh, but there is always hope and help that can be provided to anyone who should need it. My sister and I are in nearly daily contact through letters, and if you should ever need anything please let Shuri know, and she can write to me about it. I am in good standing with the Odin family, and I can offer assistance if you are ever in any sort of trouble. Do you understand, Peter?”

“I think so. Thank you M’lord, I mean, sorry, T’Challa,” Peter murmured, ducking his head and forcing himself not to question why. There was a long pause during which Peter stubbornly refused to look up, but the noise of the other alpha clearing his throat finally caught Peter’s attention, and he took a deep breath as he raised his eyes.

“I tell you this,” T’Challa went on, as if reading Peter’s mind. “Simply because I realize that things can be very difficult. My mother is omega, and though I believe my father was a good man, my mother has told me of the hardships she has faced. I realize that, at times, things may appear very bleak, but I urge you to be cautious of where you seek out help. I wish to improve life for all omegas in this country, but as of late the pull of violence towards the cause has become alluring for many, and yet rather than soften people’s hearts, it makes many alphas more resistant to change and sympathy. Last night I observed you speaking with an omega named Bucky Barnes. I do not know if you’re aware of his history, but I wish to warn you to be cautious of him. I respect Captain Rogers, but his protection of Omega Barnes concerns me. I realize that Barnes and Rogers are friends with Lord Stark, who will be marrying Loki, and so you will likely see a lot of them. Lord Stark’s ideas are no less radical than Barnes’ yet he can be reasoned with, while I fear that Barnes cannot. Please Peter, do not get enticed by a false freedom that Barnes’ fight cannot bring you. Do you understand what I am saying?”

“Yes sir,” Peter ducked his head again, biting his lip. “Thank you for your offer, and for your concern. I... I will be careful.”

“Thank you Peter,” T’Challa smiled, taking a sip of water. They sat in silence for a moment, before there was a soft shout of triumph and Shuri marched in.

“There you are!” Shuri declared. “I was looking everywhere for you, Peter, and here you already arrived!”

“You work fast without even knowing it,” T’Challa smiled. “Thank you.”

“Yes, well don’t thank me yet,” Shuri muttered, casting a look towards the door. Peter also glanced up, and then his eyebrows rose when he spotted Thor.

“Ah, T’Challa, you should have told me you were having tea!” Thor declared as he marched in, followed by none other than Steve and Bucky. Bucky’s and T’Challa’s gazes locked for a long moment, before Steve wrapped an arm around the omega’s waist and led him over to a chair, giving T’Challa a pointed look. Thor seemed ignorant of the whole exchange and happily declared, “Steve also came over to visit for tea! It’s that wonderful? We can take tea together! How does raspberry tea sound? Would you like to join us, Shuri? Oh, and Peter, can we also have some of those blueberry scones?”

“I...” Peter blinked, looking around in shock.

“I’m alright,” Shuri turned her nose up at the idea, glaring at Bucky. “Come, Peter, I’ll show you where everything is.”

“Don’t worry about it, Shuri, I can assist Peter,” Bucky suddenly declared, standing. Thor looked shocked by the very idea, and he shook his head.

“Oh, do not worry, either of you,” Thor spoke. “Peter is Loki’s omega. He can handle all of the serving duties. You needn’t bother yourself.”

“It’s no bother,” Bucky declared, and his look offered no room for argument, so Shuri shrugged and left the room while Bucky led Peter into the kitchen. Peter gazed around the room in a state of

shock, and he opened his mouth to tell Bucky that he'd never served tea at the Odin household before and didn't know where anything was, but to his surprise Bucky got right to work, putting a kettle to boil on the stove and retrieving the scones from the pantry. Peter slowly got down a tea tray (for he at least knew where plates and the like were kept) and he waited patiently as Bucky began to place the scones delicately around a small bowl of custard that he'd also retrieved from the pantry.

"So," Bucky spoke a moment later, looking up from his arrangement. "How did things go at the dance after we left? Have you seen Loki today?"

"I... Yes, I did," Peter murmured, nodding shallowly. "Last night I went up to bed as soon as you, Steve, and Lord Stark left. This morning I got up and... visited Loki."

"And how is he?" Bucky asked absently as he moved to retrieve tea cups. Peter hesitated, unsure how to answer, but Bucky turned back to him and waited expectantly, raising his eyebrows at Peter. "I would like the truth, Peter. Tony would have come himself except he isn't quite recovered from last night's... festivities. He's spending the rest of the day in bed, but he was worried about what Odin would do to Loki after his actions at the party. It is a well known fact that Loki is every bit a proper omega who should be an outstanding representation of everything the Odin line stands for but, between you and me, we both know there is more to the story. Now, whatever story I tell Tony will be the right one that keeps all associated parties the safest, I promise, but for my own sake I want to know the truth of how Loki is doing."

"He's... I don't know what happened last night, but this morning he also needed a lot of recovering. I'm, uh, not sure he was thrilled about last night's announcement," Peter admitted belatedly. "I just mean that I think he was surprised, and... How well do you know Lord Stark anyway?"

"You're smart, Peter, I like you," Bucky chuckled softly, grinning at Peter. "Don't worry, this conversation won't move beyond this room. Steve met Tony in high school when Howard Stark sent his son to boarding school in New York. They became friends, of sorts. Sometimes I'm not sure if they're happier when they're getting along or fighting but in the end of the day they always seem to end up making things work out. Steve tells me that when they were young Tony used to sing Loki's praises. Apparently they were childhood friends. Thor and Tony were raised together, you see. Their fathers were both powerful alphas and knew that an alliance benefited both families, so it was only natural for their boys to become playmates. I am told that Loki tagged along with his older brother, silently following the older boys around the countryside in a sort of awe.

"According to Steve, Tony didn't pay Loki any mind until he began to notice the little pranks Loki would pull on his brother. Both Thor and Tony are prone to... Let's just call them pissing contests, hm? Who can throw the farthest, who can lift the heaviest rock, who can win in a wrestling contest. Tony, though, could beat Thor out at wits any day, but even Tony is no match for Loki's mind. Apparently the two of them began to get along swimmingly and were quite good friends when Tony first left for boarding school. Steve said that they used to write each other, until suddenly one day Loki's letters just... stopped. I don't know what happened that summer Tony went home, but Steve tells me that when their senior year of high school began Tony no longer wished to speak about Loki, and now it seems that the two of them can hardly stand to look at each other."

"Sorry," Peter interrupted. "But when did Loki first present as an omega?"

"I haven't finished my story," Bucky's eyes twinkled almost playfully. "But when he turned seventeen, if you must know."

"That's... that's late," Peter blinked in surprise.

Bucky hummed noncomitedly, retrieving sugar and cream.

“When he hadn’t presented by age 12 they declared he was a beta, I’m told,” Bucky stated.

“Useless to Odin. At least now he can be married off for money, yes? Anyway, I’d like to continue. As I was saying, for some unknown reason Tony stopped getting along with Loki, but that drove him to become closer friends with Steve. When they graduated Tony moved back home, Steve joined the army, and they grew apart. I suppose it is lucky that Steve just happened to be stationed here, in England. He and I stay at the provided housing during the week, but we frequently come out to stay at Tony’s manor on weekends. I can’t say that I know Tony particularly well, but we share some similar ideals. Tony, Steve, and I often enjoy sharing drinks and speaking about what could be, along with a few of Tony’s other... friends.”

“Does Thor join you?” Peter asked, to which Bucky chuckled.

“Heavens no,” Bucky laughed. “I can’t imagine that would go over well. No, there’s a few other people that you have not met, and occasionally one of Tony’s many conquests in love will attend with him. I would ask if you wanted to join one of our meetings except I think Loki would have your head. I don’t typically interact with Tony except during our meetings. Tony long ago realized that I am not like the omegas he spends time with, so I think he’s given up on me. Besides, I keep too many secrets for Tony’s taste.”

“But Steve likes you,” Peter pointed out.

“Yes, that he does,” Bucky chuckled softly, moving to take the bubbling tea off the stove.

“How did you meet Steve?”

Bucky hesitated when he was asked that question, his expression going dark for just a moment, before he murmured, “We were friends as children. But why are you asking me questions when you still haven’t answered my own. Tell me more about how Loki is doing.”

“He got very drunk,” Peter finally admitted, sighing. “And this morning he wasn’t doing well emotionally, I think. He kind of almost jumped off the balcony in the attic and also hinted that I wouldn’t need to be taking orders from him for very long and... He got some sleep and when he woke up he denied the whole thing so it might’ve just been because of the drink and he didn’t mean what he was saying and doing.”

“I see,” Bucky nodded, sighing softly. “Thank you Peter. Don’t worry, I’ll tell Tony that Loki also went overboard at the ball last night, but that he’ll be alright. I’ll recommend that whatever they do together next should be a fun event, one that is designed to bring them together rather than pull them further apart. Although I do not particularly like Loki, I do not wish him such an ending as throwing himself off the balcony of the attic. I have tried to offer him help before, but he always refuses it. Still, as omegas we must look out for one another, yes Peter?”

“Yes,” Peter nodded, gazing up at Bucky in a sort of awe.

“Alright,” Bucky chuckled, balancing the tea tray on one arm as he playfully cuffed Peter’s hair. “Come on, can you get the door for me? Can’t have the alphas’ tea getting cold, now can we?”

Peter giggled softly and hurried to do as he was told. Peter did his best to help Bucky serve the tea, all the while trying his best to ignore the way T’Challa kept trying to catch his eye.

Once everything was served it was clear that Peter wasn’t expected or perhaps even welcome to stay, so he slipped out and occupied himself with helping to clean up the ballroom alongside Shuri,

who didn't seem to be in a mood for talking. Eventually T'Challa came in to bid his sister goodbye and give Peter a brief reminder about their conversation, which made Peter both thankful for the kind alpha, but also uneasy as he had never met an alpha willing to offer free help, and Peter had a hard time trusting that any alpha would actually be so generous. Once their conversation drew to a close, Shuri followed T'Challa out to his carriage, leaving Peter to keep cleaning. He was interrupted again, however, this time by Bucky.

Steve stood in the doorway when Bucky entered, his serious face hidden by shadows. Bucky was less teasing with Steve hovering nearby, but still offered Peter a friendly sort of farewell and a promise that they wouldn't be strangers. Although Peter truly didn't know either T'Challa nor Bucky, there was an odd sort of ache in his heart when they left, so he hurried to continue cleaning to distract himself from the idea that he had just said goodbye to friends that he hadn't even truly finished making.

Chapter End Notes

So you get to see a bit more of what's running through Loki's mind here. What do you think of T'Challa and Bucky? I had a good time adding them in and I'm curious to see what you think of the two of them :)

Fear and Loathing

Chapter Notes

Thanks for all the awesome comments last chapter, it was fun reading them! Also a big thanks to LokisLonelyLady for helping out on this chapter. The Loki/Peter dynamic is slowly changing and figuring out how to carry through with that took a bit of discussion... enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*And now I see, I see it for the first time
There is no crime in being kind
Not everyone is out to screw you over
Maybe, oh just maybe they just wanna get to know you*

The next two days were oddly quiet around the Odin estate. There was no word from Lord Stark, and Loki went about his life without so much as looking at, let alone speaking to Peter. If Peter didn't know better he would have thought that perhaps Loki was ashamed and avoiding Peter after the way the last few days had gone. As it was, Peter decided that perhaps Loki was always aloof and had grown bored of ruling over Peter's life.

Shuri retrieved Peter in the morning so that the omega could help serve breakfast, but then without any instruction from Loki (who sat silent at the table while his father and brother chatted about a fox hunt that Thor planned on attending) Peter was left wondering what he was to do during the day. On Sunday Peter sought Loki out and dared to ask if he had tasks Peter was meant to accomplish. He found the other omega in the library, seated regally in a large armchair by the window, an ancient looking book in his lap. Loki was decidedly unamused at Peter's interruption to his reading and he told Peter that he could do as he pleased so long as Peter stayed out of the way. Peter took to following Shuri around and providing her with help.

Peter found that Shuri's duties were not particularly interesting, but he still enjoyed spending time with her. He was surprised when, half way through the afternoon, Shuri stated that she would be taking her break by riding into the countryside with Thor. Apparently they had become friends and she and Thor often took rides together when Shuri wasn't on the job, so that left Peter again wondering what to do. He wandered out to the stables where he found several horses, so he ended up occupying himself by spending time with them, and the next day was more of the same.

By Tuesday, Peter was becoming decidedly bored and actually wished to be given a task for at least then he wouldn't have to while away the hours doing absolutely nothing. After getting dressed that morning, Peter sat by his window until there was a knock on his door. Assuming it was Shuri, Peter didn't answer it for she always marched in on her own accord, but a second, more urgent knock caused Peter to sigh and move to open the door. When he saw who it was, his jaw dropped.

"Lord Odin! I'm so sorry," Peter bowed deeply, swallowing hard. "I had not realized it was you..."

"As Shuri worked over the weekend to help clean after the ball she will not be working much this week," Odin stated. "My younger son would typically retrieve you in such a scenario, however he is not capable of that right now. You must go to him. He will require your constant services for the

next few days. Fetch breakfast for the both of you and then hurry up to his room.”

“Yes sir,” Peter nodded, swallowing hard and ducking his head to avoid having to meet the man’s eyes. Something in his gaze unsettled Peter, and the boy tried not to shiver as he slunk by Odin, shoulders slumped nervously. A touch at the small of his back startled Peter tremendously, and he spun, stumbling back a step when he found Odin just a bit too close for comfort.

“My boy,” Odin spoke, his voice kind and measured. “Do you know what you are to do?”

“Fetch breakfast?” Peter asked, swallowing hard and taking one more step back.

“Loki has gone into heat,” Odin sighed softly, leaning more heavily against his cane. “You are to assist him with whatever he may need. Yes?”

“Yes,” Peter nodded quickly. “Right, I... I understand. Thank you.”

“Do you know how you are to help?” Odin asked. “I am available if you require any assistance or instruction.”

“No, thank you sir,” Peter shook his head, edging towards the end of the hall, anxious to escape the close proximity to the alpha whose gaze was just a little too sharp. “I’ll be alright. Thank you for telling me, Lord Odin.”

“Yes, of course,” Odin murmured. “Here, I will open the door for you.”

Peter froze, flattening himself to the wall as Odin moved past him to open the door at the end of the hallway. It seemed to take far too long before the rusty door knob turned, but when it did Peter hurried out of the room, dashing down to the kitchen and away from the uncomfortable feeling that lingered in that hallway.

The reality of the situation didn’t truly hit Peter until he was walking up the stairs to the attic. It was only when he was about to push the door to Loki’s room open that he realized he hadn’t the slightest idea of what was expected of him. He supposed that Odin’s instruction could have been useful, but something about that the previous situation had put him on edge. Now, though, he felt utterly unprepared to enter Loki’s room. Peter, of course, had been through heat at his school many times over. There was a room at the school designed specially for it, and the omegas were permitted to curl up there together, comforting each other through the process until they were able to resume their lessons. Typically there was always at least one other omega in the room and it helped significantly in making Peter feel less alone. The worst times were when he was the only one, and those times ached and left him feeling dirty and awful. He shivered as he remembered it. Simply standing, remembering, and waiting to enter didn’t help make this situation better, though, so Peter knocked and then slowly pushed the door open.

The curtains at the window were closed, casting the room into shadow, so it took Peter a moment for his eyes to adjust. When they did he spotted a small figure curled up, huddled in bed, and it took several moments for Peter to realize that the small figure was in fact Loki. He approached cautiously and found the other omega curled in a ball, long black curls falling into his eyes. He looked up when Peter cleared his throat, and the older omega winced.

“What are you doing here?” Loki demanded, the usual venom lost from his voice when he trailed off with a soft whimper. He cleared his throat, attempting to sit up just a bit more though the effort left him panting. Once he’d caught his breath, Loki swallowed hard and then demanded, “Father sent you, didn’t he? I told him, I will not require your service.”

“I brought you breakfast. And tea. I always like tea during heat,” Peter pointed out hesitantly, though Loki held his midsection and looked away.

“Not hungry,” he muttered softly. “Please, just go. Shuri has the day off, does she not? Just... go down to the village, leave, spend time with her. You have the day off as well. I do not require your service. Just... just go.”

Loki broke off with another small noise, curling up with his forehead to his knees, trembling, and Peter sighed and bit his lips together. After a long moment of silence, Peter placed the tray with both of their breakfasts aside and then very slowly sat on the bed, studying Loki. The dark haired boy felt the way the bed dipped, and he looked up in surprise, eyes flashing between Peter and the tray, his guarded look confused.

“I said you could go,” Loki repeated. “Go... go be with Shuri, I don’t want you here.”

Peter bit his lip when Loki broke off with a soft whine and moved to curl up on his side, simply focusing on his breathing and holding his middle. Peter observed him silently, sighing as he placed a gentle hand on Loki’s shoulder. The reaction was instantaneous.

Loki hissed and pulled away violently, sitting up to glare at Peter, who pulled his hand away so fast you’d think he was pulling his hand from a tank of sharks. The two locked eyes for a long moment, and then Loki’s mouth curled into a snarl.

“I told you to go,” Loki’s voice was soft, dangerous. “I gave you an order.”

“And I’m not going to follow it,” Peter replied firmly. “I don’t know if you’ve gone through heat alone before, but it’s awful. It’s like your insides are tearing you apart, as if you’re the only person in the world who could possibly stoop so low, as if you will never be able to stand up again and view the world with any sort of light.”

“I have gone through every heat alone,” Loki suddenly interrupted him, eyes narrowing on Peter. “And I... I do not plan on changing that now. I am fine. I am Lord Odinson and I do not need assistance from anyone.”

“You.... bought me to help you, did you not? This is my job?”

“Your job is to listen to me, and I told you to leave,” Loki demanded quietly, wincing again and resuming his position curled up against his pillow. Peter hesitated, licking his lips once, but again he sighed and shook his head.

“No, I won’t leave,” Peter finally murmured, shaking his head. Loki’s eyes narrowed, and he glared up at Peter with enough fire that it was surprising that Peter didn’t melt on the spot.

“I gave you a direct order, and you disobey me?” Loki growled. “What, are you to take advantage of a perceived weakness from my heat and use this moment to defy me when I cannot punish you for doing so?”

“No,” Peter murmured, eyes soft. “This has nothing to do with weakness, and everything to do with the fact that I have been where you are now, and I can’t leave you like this. I can’t. I am not staying as a job, or leaving as a job. Shuri has the day off, and it sounded like you were giving me the day off as well. You said I could go spend time with Shuri, but I’m going to spend my day off a different way. I’m going to spend it with you because no matter what I think of you, no one deserves to go through this alone. As omegas we need to look out for one another.”

Loki blinked at Peter in surprise, before his eyes narrowed suspiciously and he shook his head.

“Why,” Loki demanded with a soft hiss. “Why would you do this? What do you want from me?”

“Want from you? I don’t want anything,” Peter blinked with an innocent, sweet sort of surprise. “I simply wish that you would realize that we are both omegas, and I believe that we face similar struggles. I know how hard this is to go through, especially on your own, and I can’t leave you now. Perhaps you don’t want me here, but I know that I can help you, and if you have the chance to help someone and then you don’t, then you are no better than the people who have placed you in this attic room or me in a place to be bought.”

“I said I don’t want your pity,” Loki frowned.

“And I don’t want your pity,” Peter replied, sounding just a bit too snarky when he added, “Not that I believe I would get it anyway. I don’t have that high of expectations for you.”

Loki frowned and opened his mouth to reply, but he was cut off when he let out a soft whine, curled up around himself, and panted and trembled. Peter let Loki recover for a moment, the older omega’s eyes pressed shut as whimpers fell from between his lips. This time, when Peter placed a gentle hand on Loki’s shoulder, Loki didn’t pull away. This is where Peter paused, letting Loki adjust, his hand resting innocently on Loki’s shoulder while Peter sat on the edge of the bed.

“Tea,” Loki finally forced out, pressing his eyes shut for a moment before he managed to look up at Peter. “You take tea during your heats?”

“Yes I do,” Peter nodded, studying Loki.

“Do you have some there, on the tray?”

“Yes, there is hot tea here,” Peter nodded, glancing over at the steaming cup. “It’ll grow cold soon, though...”

“Then perhaps you’d best give it to me before it does,” Loki replied. He tried and failed to sit up, though he shrugged off Peter’s help when the boy reached over for him. After another attempt, Loki managed to get himself into a sitting position. He was curled with his knees to his chest, and he accepted the warm cup that Peter pressed into his hands. He took a long sip which made his eyes flutter closed with a sigh. Peter watched Loki carefully as the omega brought the cup to his lips a second time, humming softly. Within a few minutes, the tea was gone. Loki expressed his dismay with a groan, frowning as he peered into the cup. When Peter spoke up suddenly, Loki startled and hurried to meet his eyes.

“Would you like my tea as well?” Peter asked. “There were two cups here on the tray.”

Loki blinked, his lips pressing into a thin line, but after a long pause he nodded once and accepted the second cup of tea, going slower with this one. The room was silent, but it wasn’t altogether uncomfortable, and Peter found himself studying the dark haired omega when he thought Loki wasn’t paying attention. Bucky’s earlier words had touched something inside of Peter, and had made him reconsider his own mind. Peter had been so ready to hate Loki, and though he certainly didn’t like him any better now, Peter wondered if perhaps there was more to the story, as Bucky had said.

“You weren’t given this room for safety, were you?” Peter suddenly asked once Loki had finished the second cup of tea. His words made Loki frown, curling away from Peter.

“Why do you say that?” Loki asked, pulling his blanket close.

“Because, as you said, your father sent me here. That means he knows you’re in heat, and how

would he know unless he saw you today,” Peter raised his eyebrows at Loki. “Shuri is not here to tell him, and anyway Shuri told me she isn’t allowed in your room. I have seen no other servants in the house, and the only alphas I have seen are your father, brother, and the carriage driver who I have never seen come in past the courtyard and certainly not into the house. You are not in any state to leave bed, yet somehow your father found out about your current state so that he could come tell me.”

“You are an intelligent little thing, aren’t you?” Loki murmured, looking genuinely impressed for a moment. “But you are not entirely correct. Though the family no longer has a full staff, Thor and father both have personal valets who you do not see because they come only in the morning and at night and spend the rest of the time caring for the grounds, though father’s valet does take over some duties when Shuri is not available. You are right about one thing, though, father came to see why I had not come to breakfast and he found me here, as he always does.”

“Are the valets alphas?” Peter asked softly.

“No,” Loki shook his head. “They are not.”

“Then who would you be in danger from, if not a servant or your father?” Peter questioned. “Your brother?”

“Thor is crude and often thoughtless, but I do realize that his heart is in the right place even when his mind is not,” Loki murmured. “His temper is legend, but you need not fear him. He could not hurt an omega who was facing a weakness such as heat.”

“Then who?” Peter pushed. “Except I already know the answer. There is no one who would hurt you if your room was not in the attic. So why move you up here?”

“You are walking a thin line,” Loki spoke in a low voice. “And as much as I admire your intelligence, I believe there are others who would have you flogged for it. Anyway-“

Loki cut off with a gasp, his chest heaving as he curled up more into a ball, whimpering and whining as his whole body began to tremble. Peter licked his lips nervously, sighed, and then slowly edged closer. Loki was too distracted to notice when Peter moved his hand to the dark haired omega’s back. It wasn’t until Peter began to slowly rub Loki’s tense muscles that the omega’s eyes shot up to meet Peter’s in surprise. Nervous, Peter began to draw his hand away, but Loki frowned.

“Did I say you could stop?” Loki demanded through his pants. Peter was tempted to point out that Loki had never said he could start, but he bit back the retort and resumed Loki’s backrub, humming a soft lullaby he didn’t quite remember his mother singing to him as a child until Loki’s muscles relaxed. Peter looked down in surprise when he felt something against his shoulder, and his surprise only grew when he realized that Loki’s head was rested against Peter. He understood better when he noticed that Loki’s eyes were closed in sleep and his breaths were slow and even. Rather than wake him up, Peter simply smiled sadly and tucked the blanket up around the other omega’s chin, continuing to softly hum.

Loki slept most of the day, and as the sun began to dip into the sky Peter, too, felt himself nodding off. He was startled awake when Loki mumbled something in his sleep, whimpering softly. Then, to Peter’s shock, Loki began to cry in his sleep, trembling violently.

“Hey,” Peter murmured, gently shaking Loki. “Hey, wake up, it’s just a dream. Only a dream. Come on, wake up, it’s only a dream.”

Loki came awake with a gasp, his chest heaving as he jerked away from Peter's shoulder, appearing shocked when he realized he'd been resting there at all. Loki's eyes flew around the room in a panic for a moment, however Peter's hand gently rubbing his back seemed to calm Loki's breaths, and the dark haired omega took a shaking breath.

"Of course," Loki muttered. "Of course a dream. I'm fine."

"Of course," Peter mumbled in reply. "You claim you always are."

Loki glared at Peter for a moment, before he pinched the bridge of his nose. When he spoke again, his voice was tired and measured.

"It isn't a claim, it's a fact. Once you have accepted that things such as heat and emotions do not bother you you'll find it is easy to work through most of life's struggles," Loki stated matter-of-factly.

"Except when you're having a nightmare," Peter pointed out. In hindsight, Peter might've considered that he might sound too snarky, but in the moment he could only think about the help he was providing Loki and the lack of thanks he was getting for his troubles. Instead of responding with anger, though, Loki simply studied Peter intently.

"You're not like other people," Loki murmured after a long moment of silence. "I have not met someone like you, especially an omega."

"You mean someone who dares stand up to you?" Peter's eyebrows rose daringly as he curled up next to the other omega. He pulled his knees to his chest to rest his chin upon them and he tilted his head up so that he could meet Loki's eyes.

"No," Loki's answer surprised Peter. "No, someone who dares to pretend to care for someone like me."

"Your brother cares about you, does he not?" Peter murmured.

"Perhaps," was Loki's reply. "But he is not like you, not in the slightest."

"Why do I feel like that's a compliment?" Peter chuckled, and the other omega snorted softly, a smirk falling upon his lips. For a least a minute, the two gazed at each other silently. Loki's eyes locked on Peter's as he studied the younger boy, before he looked away with a sigh, curling up against his pillow.

"Well, anyway, now you're the one who is wrong about something," Peter spoke up when he grew uncomfortable with the prolonged silence. "Because I haven't been pretending anything."

Loki looked up long enough to study Peter, before he broke off in another soft whimper and curled up again, holding his knees close. Peter smiled, a sympathetic little laugh bubbling from between his lips. The glare he got in return didn't worry him this time. Rather, it just made him giggle a little bit more, nudging his shoulder against Loki's.

"I'm sorry," Peter stated between his soft giggles. "It's just that I know how you're feeling right now. I'm not laughing at you, I'm just... laughing because I know what you're feeling, and it's awful, and pathetic, and just.... I'm sorry, I really am."

"I am not pathetic," Loki grumbled against his pillow.

"No," Peter's voice grew suddenly serious as he rested a hand against Loki's shoulder. "You're

right, you're not. You're actually really strong."

This time, when the silence stretched between them, it was a companionable sort of quiet. Peter's shoulder rested against Loki's, and he could feel the gentle weight of Loki leaning back against him. Peter could hear a bird singing outside, its lilting tune a comfortable sort of music that lulled Peter into relaxing against the headboard. The faint pinks and blues of sunset shining past the thin curtains painted the wooden floorboards in pastel like a French portrait. Loki's eyes wandered from the sheets, to the floor, to Peter's face, and an unspoken tease in Loki's eyes made Peter bite his bottom lip and chuckle again. It was a odd sort of truce that they'd formed, and for a long moment it seemed almost as if things had suddenly slotted into place, as if something had gone right for once. It felt as if it could have lasted forever, and yet it ended nearly before it began when Loki's stomach grumbled and he let out a soft gasping cry.

"Hey, hey you alright?" Peter frowned, moving to fuss over the other omega.

He was waved off by Loki, and instantly told, "Yes, I'm just hungry. I require dinner now. You can fetch it and we'll take dinner here. Go, now. Hurry up."

Peter frowned and didn't move for a long moment. Loki's head was still tucked against his knees, too concerned with trembling and curling in a ball to meet Peter's eyes. Yet when Loki realized Peter hadn't moved he let out a soft snarl.

"Dinner, now," Loki snapped, looking up to meet Peter's eyes. There must have been something in the younger omega's gaze that gave Loki pause, though, for his brow creased and he added a soft, "Please?"

Peter was up and out of the room within an instant.

Dinner was a quiet affair, the two of them eating in an amiable silence. Neither omega seemed to want to talk and interrupt their new truce, however halfway through the meal Loki frowned and then finally spoke.

"Peter," Loki murmured. "Who did you go through heat with at your school? Were you alone then?"

"No," Peter looked up, surprised that he was being engaged in conversation. "There was a room at my school where omegas could go through heat together. We could snuggle there, and just help each other feel better, help each other clean up. Speaking of which, I can run you a warm bath after dinner?"

"Yes... thank you Peter," Loki murmured, an odd sort of far away look on his face. "When is your next heat scheduled to be?"

"Well I'm not sure," Peter bit his lip. "I wasn't allowed to bring anything with me when I left the school so I don't have my calendar to tell me, but I believe it is in about two weeks?"

"You'll spend it up here with me," Loki's voice held a sense of finality in it. "You tell Shuri that I want you brought here, or I will retrieve you. You will not answer your door unless it is Shuri or myself. Do you understand?"

"Yes sir," Peter murmured softly. "Thank you."

"If you have rarely spent heat alone then we should continue with what you are accustomed to, yes?" Loki reasoned.

“Yes,” Peter murmured. “Thanks... this is really the first heat you’ve ever been with anyone else? Ever?”

“That’s not entirely true,” Loki murmured, eyes far away. “My first came as a surprise. I was utterly unprepared for it. It was not spent alone, at first, however after that first time my room was moved up here. Mother wished to care for me but father forbid it, and then mother got... sick, so now she cannot.”

“Who was your first heat spent with?” Peter asked timidly, flinching at the glare Loki immediately cast at him.

“That question is not yours to ask,” Loki snapped defensively, curling away from Peter. “Go, run me a bath. I wish to clean up now.”

Peter studied Loki for a moment, refusing to move, however when Loki’s gaze grew harder Peter nodded and scrambled up, running warm water into the tub and snatching some lavender bubble bath from the shelf over the sink. Once it was done, Peter helped Loki out of bed, catching him when the other omega stumbled.

“You’ll be alright here?” Peter asked as he helped Loki sit at the edge of the tub. “I’ll be right outside.”

“Yes,” Loki murmured. “Go, I wish to be alone.”

“Yes sir,” Peter murmured, sighing as he stood up. He was almost out the door when Loki called him back. Peter had to swallow hard and take a deep breath before he could manage a half compliant look upon his face, his patience beginning to wear thin. Taking a deep breath, Peter sweetly asked, “Yes sir? Something else?”

“Thank you,” Loki murmured, catching Peter completely off guard. Loki must have sensed it, because he smirked lightly and finally shooed Peter on his way, a strange little swell in Peter’s chest.

Chapter End Notes

So, what do you think? Peter is getting braver with Loki... also I have an announcement: a few chapters ago someone guessed that the chapter titles were Marina and the Diamonds songs, however no one guessed the reason I’m choosing the songs I am so I thought I’d tell you:

Although this fic is primarily from Peter’s POV, the Marina songs are all based on Loki’s POV so for each chapter if you want to know what Loki is thinking you can check out the lyrics of the chapter titles... ;)

True

Chapter Notes

Thanks again to lokislonleyleady for editing this and letting me bounce ideas around :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Everybody tells us what to do

Think they always know what's good for you

We know they don't really have a clue

*People like to tell you what to think
Sometimes it feels right to do the wrong thing*

While Loki was in the bath, Peter decided to head downstairs to fetch dinner. The travel down was uninteresting, and the cook gave Peter several snickerdoodles to munch on before heading back upstairs with both of their dinners balanced on a tray. Peter was on his way upstairs when a voice called out, startling Peter so much he nearly dropped the tray. Turning, Peter was relieved to see it was just Thor, and a smile broke onto his face.

“Peter!” Thor declared, jogging up the steps to meet him. “I was wondering when you would come down. How do you fare? Does my brother treat you well? I hear that my brother is... restrained to his room at the moment. Is he alright?”

“Yes M’lord,” Peter nodded, balancing the heavy tray against the banister. “I’m doing well and so is M’lord’s brother.”

“Good, good,” Thor broke into a smile. “Is that your dinner? And Loki’s? Is there enough there for the both of you?”

“Yes M’lord, more than enough,” Peter nodded, gazing down at the warm chowder, bread, and potatoes. “Thank you for asking. Your staff provide plenty of food.”

“Oh good,” Thor appeared relieved. “And you eat all of it? Did Loki eat all of his breakfast? I worry for him sometimes when he goes so many meals without eating.”

“Really?” Peter blinked.

“Oh yes, he will go a day or two with no food and I attempt to make him eat but he is very frustrating and declares that father is concerned for his figure which of course is utter nonsense. You make sure he eats, alright?” Thor stood a little taller, and Peter swallowed, nervous for the first time as he nodded. Immediately Thor became amiable again, smiling as he added, “You’re a good Omega, Peter, I can see that. Do you know how to read? Loki told me that he is not permitted to provide you with books, so I thought I would do so myself. Here, I picked some I thought you might enjoy. Shuri told me that you have had little entertainment since arriving.”

Thor placed the books upon the tray, and Peter peered over to read the top one’s title. *Dresses, Frills, and Daffodils: That’s What Omegas Are Made Of.*

“Do you like it?” Thor asked hopefully. “I chose ones I thought you would enjoy!”

“Uh... yes, thank you M’lord,” Peter muttered, biting the inside of his cheek.

“Now then,” Thor went on. “I also wanted to tell you that father requests your presence in his study. Do you know where that is?”

“No M’lord,” Peter stood a little straighter, becoming nervous. “But I am delivering M’lord’s brother’s dinner right now and I do not wish it to get cold...”

“Nonsense,” Thor beamed, looping one arm over Peter’s shoulders and steering him up the stairs. “Not to worry, Peter, Loki prefers his food to be on the colder side! Lukewarm will be fine for him.”

“Uh... yes M’lord,” Peter nodded slowly, trying not to give Thor too odd a look as he was steered up the stairs and down the hall, finally arriving in front of what were presumably the doors to Odin’s office.

“Here you are!” Thor beamed, patting Peter’s shoulder. “Father’s study. I’m not to go in apparently, he likes to keep his study tidy and I broke a few things in there so... you’re on your own. Tell me how you like those books, yes? I am eager to provide you with more!”

Thor then lumbered off down the hall, leaving Peter to maneuver the tray best he could so that he could get the door open. Although Thor has a way about him that calmed Peter, the moment he stepped into the study he felt his nerves sky rocket. Odin was seated on the other side of a big desk, glasses pushed up his nose and a fire crackling in the hearth. Initially, it would be a comforting scene, but something about Odin always put Peter’s teeth on edge.

“Ah, my boy,” Odin looked up, setting his book aside. “Do come in. Please, place the tray over there on the table and take a seat. My son must have told you I wished to speak with you?”

“Yes M’lord,” Peter murmured, hurrying to set the tray aside and then bow respectfully before slowly sinking into the chair across from Odin.

“How have your duties with my younger son progressed?” Odin asked, his voice amiable despite the way his eyes scrutinized Peter. The boy gulped, shifting but forcing a smile.

“Very well, M’lord Odin,” Peter murmured, trying to sound more confident than he felt in that moment.

“What sort of tasks has he given you?”

“Bringing him food and running him a bath, M’lord Odin,” Peter murmured, feeling an odd chill in the room despite the crackling fire. “Just as I would expect.”

“Good, good,” Odin nodded, leaning forward. “And that is all?”

“Yes M’Lord Odin.”

“And you will stay the night with my son in case he shall need you tonight?”

“If he wishes me to,” Peter murmured, studying Odin carefully. The man paused, before he nodded, hands folding in front of him on the desk.

“Your loyalty is commendable,” Odin murmured. “But I would expect that you also have a mind of

your own.”

“My Lord?” Peter blinked, eyebrows drawing together in confusion. “I’m afraid I do not understand...”

“If my son should ever ask of you anything you are unwilling or unable to give, I expect you to say no,” Odin suddenly growled, the fire in the hearth seeming to crackle just a little bit louder. “You understand what I mean, do you not? I realize that during an omega’s... heat they are susceptible to moral weakness, I do not want you to succumb to any weakness my son might have, and I expect you to report it to me immediately, am I understood?”

“M’lord I...”

“Immediately,” Odin snapped. “Am I understood?”

“Yes sir, uh, My Lord,” Peter nodded quickly, his eyes wide. “But at my school we omegas occasionally sat near each other during heat and never did we-“

“I was under the impression that my son trained you and yet you still speak out of turn?” Odin’s eyes flashed. “You will not engage nor encourage such inappropriate foolishness. And you will tell no one but myself should it occur. Am I understood?”

“Yes M’Lord.”

“And if you ever feel uncomfortable in my son’s presence you are to leave immediately, yes? If he ever attempts to approach you in a way you believe unseemly you will come to me and me alone. I believe you to have good moral character, Peter, you will not disappoint me, will you?”

“No M’lord,” Peter’s eyes were wide. The alpha studied Peter for a long moment, leaving him wondering what in the world had prompted this conversation. He was studied for several more long moments, before the man waved for Peter to stand.

“On your way then,” Odin told Peter absently, returning to his book. “And tell my son that his fiancé wishes to see him. I expect you to have my son cleaned up and ready the moment his heat is concluded. Now, on your way.”

“Yes sir, thank you,” Peter murmured, though he was unsure for what he was thanking Odin. He had scarcely made it out of the room and down the hall, though, before Peter was stopped a third time. It was with a heavy heart that he turned around, knowing that by now both Loki’s and his own soup would be lukewarm at best. He was surprised to see Frigga standing there, though, and he quickly did his best to bow. “M’lady, I’m sorry, I did not realize it was you...”

“Please, do not apologize to me,” Frigga’s voice was kind. “I simply wish to know the status of my son. Is he alright? Is Loki faring well? Please, tell me only the truth.”

“Yes M’Lady,” Peter nodded. “He is doing alright. I’m bringing him dinner now.”

“But you’re staying with him most of the time, yes?” Frigga asked urgently, casting a quick glance towards her husband’s door.

“Yes M’Lady,” Peter nodded. “All of the time except when I fetch food. Is that alright?”

“Yes, thank you very much,” Frigga murmured. “That is wonderful news. You’re a good lad. Here, I have something for him, but please, do not tell anyone?”

Frigga cast one more nervous glance around before she placed a small packet of something on the tray along with a small pamphlet.

“Bits of ginger and other herbs for you to put in his tea,” Frigga murmured. “And a small bit of reading for him. Please, tell no one of this.”

“Of course M’Lady,” Peter nodded his head, despite the way his eyebrows creased just slightly. “As you wish.”

“Thank you for everything you are doing for him,” Frigga murmured again, reaching out to clasp a gentle hand to Peter’s forearm. “It means so much to me even if you get little thanks from others. Now, be on your way, I’m sure you want to get to your dinner.”

There was a smile in Frigga’s eyes when she turned, then, and began hurrying back down the hall. Peter gazed after her curiously, but a sound from within Odin’s study sent Peter into action, and he hurried the back up the stairs to the attic. He struggled to get the door open, the tray becoming increasingly heavy in his arms, yet when he did finally get it open Peter frowned.

Loki was curled back in bed, which was unsurprising, but the look on his face gave Peter pause. Frowning, Peter crept into the room, biting his lip at the redness in Loki’s eyes.

“Took you long enough,” Loki suddenly spat, his gaze guarded in the same way it had been when Peter had just arrived at Odin Manor. “I thought perhaps you had returned to your quarters.”

“Returned... no, I was just fetching dinner,” Peter murmured softly, approaching the bed.

“Who made you come back? Did you run into my father on your way to your room?” Loki spat softly, glaring, yet Peter shook his head gently again.

“No, I wasn’t leaving. I only went down to fetch dinner and then ran into various members of the household who wished to speak to me. I told you, I’m staying for your heat, and my mind isn’t going to be changed.”

Loki appeared unsure about that, however he slowly accepted the tray onto his lap as he continued to study Peter. After a long moment, he looked down at the frowned at the pamphlet sitting there.

“What is this?” Loki demanded.

“From your mother,” Peter replied. “And she also gave me some ginger and herbs for your tea. She said not to tell anyone else that she’s done this.”

Loki slowly picked up the pamphlet, running his fingers over it, before oh so slowly Loki broke into a soft smile, his eyes shining when he looked back up at Peter.

“Thank you,” he suddenly murmured. “I was wrong to doubt you. Do you know what this is? Shakespeare's sonnets. Mother read them to me when I was a child... what are these books here? Surely she didn’t provide me with *Three Kisses and Two Goodbyes*, an *Omega’s tale*...”

“Ah, no, those are for me, from your brother,” Peter chuckled softly. “He, uh, said you aren’t allowed to provide me with books so he took it upon himself to do so.”

“And he gave you these?” Loki’s eyebrows rose. “*Roses are Red and Dresses are Pink*? Or this one, *The Princess of Pennyville*?”

“Uh... yes?” Peter nodded slowly. The look on Loki’s face caused Peter to have to bite his lip, and

he began to giggle while Loki broke into a chuckle. The giggle turned into laugh which turned into a soft gasping as the two of them shared in the unspoken humor of the ridiculousness of the titles.

“Really,” Loki laughed softly. “If you’re going to read at least read something decent! Come, sit, I will read you Sonnet 108, it is one of my favorites.”

“But your dinner,” Peter argued weakly, but Loki waved him off.

“It couldn’t get any colder. Sit, we will eat after we read.”

And so Peter slowly moved to sit at Loki’s bedside as the man began to read to him, the words sounding like a soft lullaby.

Cold soup was as unappetizing as it sounded, and Peter gagged through it. Loki nearly set the plate aside and refused to eat, yet the way Peter kept watching him seemed to give the man pause, and eventually he too ate his dinner. Once it was done, Loki drank some of the tea and then curled up on his side in a ball, whining occasionally. That night was the worst, and Peter felt he was nearly constantly changing the linens or towels he placed under Loki. Loki’s words failed him and were replaced by soft whines as he complained of pain and cramping. Peter took to rubbing his back, allowing Loki to rest his head on Peter’s shoulder as he read sonnets to the other omega.

It seemed that sleep was lost on both Peter and Loki for much of the night, but finally Loki’s soft whines trailed off and Peter realized that Loki has finally fallen asleep. Peter got up to change the towel once more before letting himself drift off into sleep, the book hidden beneath the covers. The next morning was filled with more sonnets and by the time lunch rolled around, Loki was fully curled up at Peter’s side, gazing over his shoulder at the pamphlet as Peter read. Halfway through one of them, though, Peter paused and turned to glance at Loki, startling the other omega.

“What?” Loki blinked, eyes flickering over Peter’s face as he leaned away slightly. “Go on, why did you stop?”

“Sorry,” Peter murmured, biting his lip. “I was just thinking.”

“Thinking?” Loki sounded unimpressed, a soft smirk in his face. “You should know better. Thinking is not for you.”

“Really? And why’s that?” Peter replied, sounding utterly unconcerned. “Is it because I’m an omega? Is thinking not for you either? Because I’m beginning to believe that you think quite a bit.”

“How did you guess?” Loki smirked, relaxing back against the headboard and raising his eyebrows.

“Well, the fact you tossed those other books aside and jumped for the sonnets was my biggest clue,” Peter chuckled, turning in the bed to keep his gaze on Loki. “But it’s been more than that... Why did they really put your room in the attic? I know it’s not for safety.”

“That is not for you to know,” Loki frowned, crossing his arms.

“Fine.... then why do you act as you do?”

“Excuse me?” Loki frowned, tensing.

“The other day when you were drinking... You said some things that made me start thinking a lot

about who you might actually be, and then I was speaking with someone the other day and they made me think even more that... well when I first arrived I have to say that you were incredibly strict, and you're right I did hear rumors at the party. You're not the most popular person around, but I feel as though you could be if you just..."

"Who were you speaking with?" Loki frowned.

"That doesn't matter."

"Yes it does," Loki insisted. "Who was it?"

"Bucky," Peter admitted, and he was made more curious by the way Loki's posture relaxed slightly and he nodded.

"Oh that's alright then," Loki murmured.

"Is it?" Peter's eyebrows rose. "I was under the impression that he wasn't particularly popular either."

"He's not," Loki shrugged. "He's foul, and he's uncultured, but you could choose worse friends. He is not unintelligent."

"He likes to think too, huh?"

Loki smirked slightly at Peter.

"So why?" Peter insisted again. "Why act so high and mighty--"

"I am an Odinson," Loki's eyes suddenly flashed, his temper suddenly rising at those words, and Peter swallowed hard, readying himself to flee if need be as Loki continued. "I am Lord Odin's child even if I am adopted, and so I have an obligation and a right. It doesn't matter if I am an omega, it is my right."

"Fine," Peter held his hands up as a peace offering, but it seemed that it wasn't good enough for Loki, for his eyes narrowed further and he continued in his same snapping voice.

"No, it is not fine. You are no different than the rest of them. I have seen you. You treat my brother and father with full respect, you treated Stark with the same respect, and yet you continue to belittle me. You continue to presume we are on the same ground. We are not. I am an Odinson and you are my omega," Loki's monologue continued, but frankly it felt repetitive and boring at this point, and Peter found it incredibly easy to tune out. Rolling his eyes was possibly a mistake, though, for a hard slap across his face pulled Peter out of his daze with a gasp.

"You aren't even listening to me!" Loki spat.

"Maybe it's because you keep saying the same things over and over and they still don't mean anything," Peter muttered. "We are both omegas. Why, then, can we not behave like reasonable adults and get along? You keep going on and on about how much better you are than everyone but can't you see that no one cares? No one even likes you. What have you even done to garner the respect you seem to think people should pay you? You treat others with little to no respect! I was told that you not only belittle other omegas, but also poor betas and alphas. How does that bring you respect?"

"You think my brother and father don't do the same thing?" Loki fought back, teeth gnashing. "And yet no one complains of their action because they are alphas."

“Your father and brother have been kind to me,” Peter frowned. “They deserve respect.”

“Kind? By giving you these?” Loki held up one of the books Thor had given him and shook it in Peter’s face. “Are you really so stupid that you cannot see what I am trying to say to you? Thor acts kind, and he has a good heart, but he is not the savior you paint him as. He belittles others the same as anyone else. He was belittling you when he gave you these! And as for father, don’t even get me started on him. I respect him because he has managed to keep this Manor alive and running despite recent economic struggles, yet if you think him a savior for omegas or the poor you are wrong. I have tried to help you, Peter. When you came here I did what I had to do to prepare you for the reality of the ball.”

“By abusing me?” Peter fought back, fed up with this whole situation. “What, you think it’s appropriate to prepare me for what abuse you imagine I would receive? Well I will tell you that you were wrong. I was treated more kindly at the party than I ever have been with you!”

“So you would prefer to be coddled as if you are too weak minded to understand the realities of this world?” Loki spat. “Look around you. Do you really think that father or Thor truly care for you or respect you? You are nothing more than another replaceable omega to them. Someone to be cared for by them because you cannot care for yourself. You are to be treated kindly because you are nothing more than a soft, sweet, stupid omega who requires special handling because of society’s rules, but if you ever ceased to be soft and stupid you would be disposed of faster than you could recite nursery rhymes because intelligent omegas are dangerous. Omegas who do not fall into the alpha’s expectation are dangerous. Omegas who step out of line, who begin to think for themselves, who dare to live up to family standards placed on alphas that evidently don’t apply simply because you are of the opposite sex are dangerous!”

“So they get locked in the attic?” Peter sat up a little taller, smirking proudly at Loki.

Loki blinked, freezing as he noticed that Peter actually looked proud, and then Loki realized that perhaps he had been tricked. The feeling was odd, and slithered into his gut like an uneasy snake, yet his anger froze in its tracks, and Loki’s lips turned up in a small smirk.

“That is not the reason, or at least the reason goes deeper than that,” Loki told Peter smuggly. “But perhaps I underestimated your intelligence.”

“Yes, M’lord,” Peter continued to smirk. “Perhaps.”

Loki gazed at Peter for a long moment, shaking his head slightly, before a chuckle bubbled out of his mouth.

“You are fascinating,” Loki murmured, sighing and relaxing back against the headboard.

“Thank you, M’lord,” Peter nodded once. “Though I would prefer not to use a title in this situation. It’s not for lack of respect. Though, in fact, I did mean some of what I said about your actions being unnecessary. I wish you had explained to me better what the ball would be like instead of simply taking violence into your hands to train me. I am not unreasonable, sir. I saw other omegas of my station. They were doing exactly as you said I would have to. They were kneeling beside other omegas, acting simple and compliant and nibbling food from others’ hands. They were dressed like the omegas who used to stand on street corners in London where I grew up. If you had explained what was expected of me rather than beating my lessons into me I would have been more compliant.”

“Would you?” Loki asked skeptically. “Would you have believed me? When I realized your school had not taught you of such actions I knew they’d probably sound ridiculous to you. I believed you

would not believe me, and would refuse to do so until you truly saw for yourself.”

“You didn’t even try,” Peter pointed out. “You didn’t give me the chance to try and think for myself. You simply began to act, to assume I would not be able to comprehend. To assume I was indeed a simple, stupid omega.”

“Well clearly I was wrong.”

Peter had to do a double take, and his jaw slowly dropped open when Loki said those words. Loki didn’t look apologetic. In fact, he was examining nails as if they were far more fascinating than anything Peter could possibly do or say, yet the boy’s lips turned up in a smile.

“Is that an apology?” Peter asked slowly.

“No,” Loki replied, looking up. “It is a fact.”

“Is it true that you presented late as an omega?” Peter murmured, fiddling with the blanket pooled around his lap. Loki balked, hesitating before he nodded once.

“Yes,” Loki murmured slowly. “That is true. I was seventeen at the time.”

“Beta nobility are rarely treated all that different than alpha nobility,” Peter pointed out.

“Untrue,” Loki murmured. “Betas are not provided with the same level of respect.”

“But they are given respect.”

“It is not because I believed myself to be a beta that I wish to be given respect,” Loki frowned.

“I never thought I was a beta, but I too wish to be treated with respect,” Peter replied with a shrug. “Does it really matter who you are? Don’t we all deserve to be treated well?”

“Some people should garner more respect than others,” Loki frowned.

“No, some people are bowed to and others are not, but everyone deserves to be treated kindly,” Peter replied, unwavering. “Everyone deserves to be treated with respect.”

“That doesn’t mean your station is not below mine,” Loki lifted his chin up.

“You’re right,” Peter nodded. “Evidently my station is below yours. I am your omega. And the world will only ever see me as that. But I thought, perhaps, you could look beyond it once in a while and realize that even if my station is below yours, I can still think and reason and understand, and maybe you at least could treat me differently. Please? Thor has been kind to me, even if he does act as though I am just pretty and stupid.”

“Thor and I are very different people,” Loki murmured. “However... I already shared my sonnets with you, and I will continue to share that and more if it really makes you so happy.”

“Thank you,” Peter murmured. “M’lord.”

Loki hesitated, ducking his head in a shallow incline, studying Peter closely, before he murmured, “In public we act as we always have, yes?”

“Of course,” Peter nodded. “I now understand the propriety of your station, and mine. Public is different than when I am caring for you during your heat.”

“Then perhaps in times such as these, or in times when we are not under the scrutiny of my family, I do not require a title.”

Peter swallowed hard, and his jaw slowly dropped as he studied Loki. He now had a better understanding of why Loki acted as he did, and that statement came as a total surprise to Peter.

“I realize that you being an omega, compared to your brother being an alpha, shouldn’t give you less respect than him. You are equals, you are brothers,” Peter murmured softly.

“And that is why I am revoking my title when we are together,” Loki murmured. “Because I can see that you do understand that.”

“Thank you... Loki,” Peter’s voice was soft as he tested the name out on his tongue, and the other omega had an odd sort of look in his eyes. Peter felt as though he was smiling without using his lips. “You care not what the public whispers about you, do you? You wish them to give you the treatment you should receive as a son of Odin, correct?”

“I cannot bow to the public’s whims,” Loki murmured. “I realize that they all hate me, but I will not play the part they wish me to. My father has taught me how a member of the nobility is to act, and I refuse to do differently.”

“That isn’t wrong,” Peter murmured. “But I believe it is wrong to harm others unnecessarily while you do so.”

“Many refuse to treat me with the respect I deserve.”

“But that doesn’t mean you should then harm them,” Peter murmured. “If you act like you should be respected, and just continue to behave with dignity and elegance, then others will come to appreciate you. Like your mother. I think she is well respected, is she not?”

“Indeed,” Loki murmured. “My mother deserves to be the true ruler of the household. She deserves everything.”

“And one day perhaps you will be like her,” Peter murmured. “Eventually.”

Loki glared at Peter, who was smirking and giggled softly when Loki took a gentle, false slap at his hair. Loki gasped, though, when he performed the sudden movement, curling back into a ball, and Peter smiled sympathetically, rubbing Loki’s back and holding him close.

Sonnet 108:

What's in the brain that ink may character

Which hath not figured to thee my true spirit?

What's new to speak, what now to register,

That may express my love, or thy dear merit?

Nothing, sweet boy; but yet, like prayers divine,

I must each day say o'er the very same;

Counting no old thing old, thou mine, I thine,

Even as when first I hallowed thy fair name.

So that eternal love in love's fresh case,

Weights not the dust and injury of age,

Nor gives to necessary wrinkles place,

But makes antiquity for aye his page;

Finding the first conceit of love there bred,
Where time and outward form would show it dead.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks again for your comments! Your support helps inspire me to keep coming up with ideas and thinking about this fic. I posted a little early this week because I know I'll be too busy this weekend...

What do you think of Frigga, Odin, Thor? Loki and Peter's dynamic is starting and will continue to change... also tony will be showing up in a very soon, upcoming chapter :) Look forward to your comments!

Lies

Chapter Notes

Surprise! I had some spare minutes so I'm uploading today!
And here is what everyone is waiting for: Tony is back again and has hopes of improving things between him and Loki! You'll soon see how that goes...

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

You're never gonna love me, so what's the use?

What's the point in playing a game you're gonna lose?

What's the point in saying you love me like a friend?

What's the point in saying it's never gonna end?

The next few days of Loki's heat were actually the most enjoyable days that Peter had spent at the manor. They were full of good food from the kitchens, Shakespeare, and lounging in bed beside Loki. The two found that they both had a decent sense of humor so they took to teasing each other and then lapsing into long bouts of companionable silence as Peter rubbed Loki's back and helped him relax until the pain went away. No one bothered them, and Peter could see Loki relaxing a little more each day, slowly unwinding until he was someone Peter truly felt he could be close to. Although the older boy had been reluctant at first, Peter took to cuddling him and when Loki realized that eased some of the aching in his belly he agreed and began napping with his head rested comfortably against Peter's shoulder. Peter almost wished this could go on forever, yet predictably on day five Peter woke up knowing the heat was at its end. He wasn't sure what it was, but the air felt cleaner and fresher, and he could see that the linens were no longer in need of changing.

Still, Peter savored these last moments. Loki hadn't awoken yet, and Peter smiled down at the other omega who was curled up against him, his face relaxed in sleep, his hair falling in his eyes. Peter had a fleeting thought that, perhaps, people were so aggressive towards Loki because they were jealous of his striking beauty, but Peter quickly pushed the thought aside because he knew it was incredibly inappropriate to think of another omega as beautiful. Still, Peter smiled sadly and pushed Loki's hair out of his eyes and smiled when the older boy let out a soft noise of annoyance as he began to wake.

"Morning," Peter murmured. "How do you feel?"

"Like I want to go back to sleep," Loki grumbled. "What time is it?"

"Well... I'd say probably about eight or nine?" Peter guessed. "Based on the sun."

Loki groaned, nuzzling closer for just a moment more before he yawned and sat up, stretching and yawning again. He glanced down, blushed, and then smiled.

"It's over," he murmured. "Finally. And that... wasn't half bad."

"Yeah?" Peter smiled. "I did good?"

“Must have,” Loki shrugged. “Because normally I can hardly talk or move and this time I was reading sonnets so... so yes, I think you did do well.”

“See? Told you it’s better to spend heat with another omega,” Peter grinned, but the smile on Loki’s face froze, faded, and then turned into a scowl.

“Do not say that. I did not spend my heat with you! Don’t you dare tell people otherwise. Do you understand me?” Loki demanded, his voice dangerous, and Peter held his hands up, shrugging nervously.

“Okay,” Peter gasped out, shrugging. “Fine but... But isn’t that what just happened?”

“You helped me through my heat, we did not spend my heat together. They were different things, yes? Do you understand?”

“Yeah, yeah I do, fine,” Peter blinked, shrugging helplessly. “I helped you, whatever...”

“Good,” Loki straightened his hair out and took a deep breath. “Because you told me that my father expects us to meet with Lord Stark as soon as my heat is finished and we need to have our story straight. Now, run me a bath and get changed, I can dress myself. We’ll have breakfast and then I expect Stark will arrive this afternoon.”

“Yes Sir,” Peter nodded, stumbling out of bed to do as he was told, though he paused when Loki held up a hand.

“Thank you,” the older omega smiled, and Peter chuckled, nodding.

“You’re welcome, Loki,” Peter replied, before moving to run the bath.

The afternoon was the first warm one in what felt like weeks, and the sun shone through the manor like a promise. Frigga and Thor were nowhere to be seen, but Odin couldn’t seem to keep out of the library where Loki and Peter were sitting. Whether it was straightening Loki’s long green coat, or simply lecturing him on how best to impress Tony, the alpha refused to leave the two of them alone. Loki only seemed mildly annoyed, but Peter again felt nervous and he curled up by Loki’s side a little tighter, swallowing hard.

It was incredibly unfortunate because Loki had promised Peter a chair, yet the moment Odin had entered the room Peter had been forced to slide to the ground where he was still kneeling beside Loki. Still, he managed to glare at Odin’s back whenever the alpha wasn’t looking and this glare only became more deadly when Odin began to pet his hair. The warning look Loki gave him from the corner of his eye was enough to make Peter send Odin a ditzy smile, as sweet as sugar water, and it left Loki swallowing a soft snort.

Finally the afternoon rolled around and Odin took off to attend a tennis match with some friend of his, leaving Peter to let out a sigh of relief as he plopped into the chair beside Loki.

“How long until Mr Stark gets here?” Peter murmured. “And I have to pretend I’m a half brained puppy again.”

“That won’t be necessary when Tony is here,” Loki murmured, pretending to be focused on his book. “My father is out of the manor so do as you please. I do have to warn you, though. Stark, uh, might take an interest in you. He did the other night and I am not certain it won’t happen again.”

"I'll ignore him," Peter promised, and Loki looked tempted to let it go, however he took a deep breath and slowly shook his head, pressing his eyes shut for a moment.

"No," Loki murmured. "Please, don't do anything you're uncomfortable with, but father says that if he attempts to, uh, seduce you that there is no reason for you to stop him."

"Your father said that?" Peter asked slowly. "But aren't you Mr Stark's fiancé?"

"I am," Loki nodded slowly. "But... But I know Tony isn't thrilled with that. He legally isn't allowed to have you without also having me because you're my omega. So if he ever wanted a, uh, relationship with you he would have to marry me first."

"So what, I am your pawn in your game of marriage?" Peter spat, eyes flashing. Loki sighed and rubbed the bridge of his nose helplessly, shrugging.

"That's how my father would see it," Loki murmured. "But I already said, don't do anything you're uncomfortable with. I'm just reporting what father told me. Do what you like. It's not my place to make that kind of decision for you."

"You sure? Because I thought I was your omega? Aren't you supposed to tell me exactly what to do?" Peter raised his eyebrows half playfully, and Loki rolled his eyes, glaring.

"Shut up," Loki chuckled, glaring at Peter with a twinkle in his eyes. "Before I make you."

"Careful, darling, you don't want another scandal."

The two froze when the door to the library opened, and then Loki was swallowing, glaring at the man who'd slipped in unannounced. Tony's eyes were teasing as he looked between the two omegas, and when Loki slowly stood to meet him, Tony pressed an absent kiss to his lips.

"Hello there, my love," Tony flashed a grin. "How goes it?"

"Depends on what you mean by it," Loki spat softly. Tony's smile wavered, but he simply clapped Loki on the back, chuckling half nervously and winking at Peter.

"Ah, Loki, always such a kidder," Tony declared. "Hey there Pete. How's life been treating you?"

"I've been well, Mr Stark," Peter reassured him, rising to his feet, but not yet approaching the couple.

"Excellent!" Tony declared. "Because I have some fun planned for us today."

"I'm quaking with excitement," Loki muttered just loud enough that Tony would hear him.

"Well," Tony declared, pointedly ignoring Loki's commentary. "It's great to see the both of you. I'm glad you're both alright after the ball. I tried to come by the next day, but you know how it is in the morning after one of those parties. Anyway, my buggy is outside, I thought we could go into countryside and have a picnic!"

"By buggy do you mean your horseless carriage?" Loki asked slowly, and Peter's jaw hit the floor.

"A what?" Peter's jaw dropped. "What's that?"

"Come on out and see it, I built it myself!" Tony grinned, offering his free arm to Peter. There was a long pause and a silent conversation between the two omegas, before Peter slipped forward and then Tony was tugging both omegas from the room.

“Top speeds of 20 kilometers in an hour, I tested it last month you see, nearly as fast as a horse and it’ll be faster by the time I am done with it,” Tony was saying, practically skipping down the steps of the manor. When Peter spotted it, he nearly trembled with excitement, and he broke away to run his hands along the side, clearly enamoured.

“This is amazing,” Peter murmured, his breath catching in his throat. “Like... Like Jules Verne! This is incredible...”

“You know Jules Verne?” Tony pulled Peter to a stop, and the omega flushed, eyes flashing to Loki who looked less than impressed.

“Uh, well I did, uh, run across his works once or twice to be honest,” Peter stumbled over his words. Tony, however, didn’t seem to care less that the writing of Jules Verne was not appropriate for omegas. Instead his laugh was joyous and he patted Peter on the back.

“Where have you been all my life, Pete?” Tony beamed. “Never have I found an omega who likes Verne! See, my love? This is the sort of literature that is true art! If you ever took your nose out of Hamlet you’d see that!”

“If your buggy is so excellent then why don’t we take it for a spin?” Loki raised his eyebrows. Evidently that was exactly the right thing to say, for Tony chuckled and nodded, helping the two omegas into the automobile before hopping in himself as the engine rumbled to life. Peter had never heard anything quite so loud, nor quite so beautiful, and then they were off.

“So,” Tony had to practically shout over the noise of the engine as they bounced along down the otherwise quiet lane. “Peter, you like machinery?”

“When I was a child I worked in a factory,” Peter declared. “It wasn’t the nicest conditions but I found the machinery to be.... very interesting!”

“Then perhaps I’ll have to bring you to visit my factory!” Tony replied, grinning toothily. “It’s completely safe, we’ve never had an accident. The employees don’t have to perform dangerous manual labor, and I even have a climate control unit that keeps the building from becoming too warm in the summer!”

“That’s incredible!” Peter’s jaw dropped. Loki huffed, leaning against the side of the buggy and watching the fields pass by as they bounced toward a stream bordering a big grassy hill with an old eucalyptus tree on top. When Loki realized where they were going, he froze, eyes searching Tony’s uneasily. The other man simply grinned in return, kissing Loki’s cheek quickly as he pulled the buggy to a stop.

“And here we are!” He declared, grinning. “Tada!”

“Really?” Loki drawled slowly. “You brought us here?”

“What? Don’t you have good memories of this place?” Tony asked slowly. Loki swallowed hard. He took a long time to answer, but Tony waited for him expectantly. When Loki did finally manage to speak, his voice was quiet.

“The best,” was Loki’s soft reply.

“Well, come on then! I’ve got egg salad sandwiches and scones and sherry!” Tony declared, hopping out of the automobile and then helping the two omegas out. He snatched a basket from the back, tossing Peter a checkered sheet and then leading the way over to the stream, beaming as he asked, “Come on, Peter, help me with this blanket here will you?”

Peter hurried to do as he was told, chuckling as Tony cracked jokes and beamed at him, leaving Loki to wander around the spot absently, smiling at nothing in particular. His eyes wandered to the tree at the top of the hill, and he smiled as the leaves waved slowly in the wind, the smell of eucalyptus wafting through the air. He knelt beside the stream and let his fingers brush across the water smoothed pebbles, the water dancing at his fingers with all the vigor of a bright spring day. The sun made the stream sparkle, and dragonflies darted just over the water, bringing back the stories the boys used to make up about how dragonflies were really pixies, until they'd grown up and left the dragonflies, and the stream, and the eucalyptus behind. Now they were nothing more than distant memories.

"Loki, do you want to miss your lunch?" Tony suddenly called, already sitting beside Peter on the blanket. A glass of sherry was in his right hand while his left was settled incredibly close to Peter's. Loki cast one more look at the stream, before he smiled softly and made his way to sit beside the alpha, allowing himself to continue to smile.

The afternoon was the closest thing to heaven that he had ever gotten. It was full of smiles, it was full of laughs. It was genuine, it felt real. Shakespeare was quoted alongside Verne, and it could have lasted forever and he still wouldn't have gotten enough of it. If one was to believe the novels, this was how life was supposed to be. But novels aren't reality, and reality always comes crashing in, eventually. And it did that afternoon as well. Nothing can stop reality, not even a little slice of heaven.

The sun was beginning to set when it happened. Peter was helping to clean up, folding the blanket and humming a song that Tony had been singing earlier. Loki was back by the stream's edge, sitting with his fingers just under the water's surface, when Tony settled beside him. They were silent, it was perfect, and then Tony began to speak.

"You know," he murmured. "I've always loved this spot."

"Yes?" Loki asked, turning his head towards him. "Have you really?"

"I have," Tony nodded, his eyes focused on something far away, maybe a memory. "I thought about it when I was in New York. I thought about it when I was in London. I still think about it today from my manor. It reminds me of the past, of you and your brother. What happened to us, Loki? What happened?"

"I grew up," Loki murmured.

"You didn't have to."

"You never understood," Loki sighed. "You didn't then, and you still don't. When father thought I was a beta, it was the beginning of the end."

"But you aren't a beta now."

"You're right, and I wasn't a beta a year and a half ago when you told me that you didn't love me."

"Loki, you know why I couldn't a year and a half ago. But I stood up for you, didn't I? I supported you."

"You agreed to marry me," Loki murmured. "Because you felt sorry for me. Not because you loved me."

"But I do love you," Tony suddenly declared. "I do."

“What?” Loki turned to him, his voice soft, his eyes lost. “But I thought...”

“You are the dearest friend I will ever have,” Tony murmured. “I do love you, Loki. I value your friendship. I didn’t want to see you thrown to the streets by your father. I couldn’t let that happen.”

“You love me... as a friend?” Loki asked slowly, his mouth dry.

“You are such a dear friend,” Tony nodded, reaching out for Loki’s hand. “I don’t care what happened in the past, I’m not letting your father destroy you. I know you do not care for me, and you don’t have to be worried because I don’t feel that way for you either. That’s the beauty of our relationship, don’t you see? You can still see who you want, I won’t tell anyone. You can bed whoever you desire and I won’t tell a soul, and I can bed who I desire, and at the end of the day we’ll fall in bed together and be forever side by side.”

“Forever together?” Loki spat softly.

“Of course,” Tony nodded. “What we have, it can’t be broken apart. Of course I might be bedding omegas, but they’d never take me away from you.”

“And this is what you want?” Loki growled, his gaze turning dark. “This is what you want your future to be? Pretending behind walls, pretending forever? This isn’t a mistake to you? This isn’t... isn’t wrong to you?”

“Well I... isn’t that what you want?” Tony blinked.

“To pretend forever?” Loki growled. “Yes, perhaps that is exactly what I will want.”

Within a moment, Loki was standing, his fists clenched at his side, the inside of his bottom lip pulled between his teeth his eyes shining with tears he refused to shed.

“Take me home,” Loki suddenly demanded. “I want to go home.”

“Loki,” Tony frowned. “What? What did I say wrong? That is what you want isn’t it? That is why you got Peter? I just assumed, considering who you spent your first heat with, that... Well, I thought this would be a good cover if you want to have another affair, and I would not judge you harshly if that person is another omega.”

“You haven’t the slightest idea what I want,” Loki spat. “And no, that is not why I got Peter.”

“So... What, Peter is available?” Tony blinked, glancing over at the omega who was now watching them with wide, confused eyes. Loki swallowed hard, grinding his teeth together as Tony frowned, slightly asking, “Peter does know, right? It wasn’t wrong to bring this up in front of him?”

“Oh, now you ask? You are despicable,” Loki muttered under his breath. “I don’t understand why I am the only one who can see that.”

“What? I am trying to make this work for us!” Tony cried. “Hey! Hey don’t walk away from me!”

Tony reached out to grab Loki’s bicep as the omega turned to walk the other way, but the dark haired young man turned and snarled, ripping himself from Tony’s grasp.

“Don’t you dare touch me,” Loki spat. “I am walking home.”

“Walking... Loki, don’t be ridiculous. You can’t walk home from here at this time in the

afternoon!” Tony cried.

“Oh no? Watch me,” Loki spat, turning and marching away again. Tony sighed, his eyebrows drawn together as he ran a confused hand through his hair, slowly shaking his head.

“Loki? Come on, Loki, hold on! Please, let me take you home? Come, think of your shoes! Think of your reputation! Think of your family, your father, if you come home like this what will he think?” Tony pleaded and finally, with that last statement, it was like a switch was flipped, and Loki froze, before slowly making his way to the automobile, his head down.

“Take me home,” he demanded. “Now. I wish to go home.”

“Loki?” Peter murmured, but one look told him to shut up so he slowly climbed in beside Loki, his hand brushing comfortingly against Loki’s. Tony rubbed the back of his neck, chewing his lip, however he slowly complied, starting the engine and looking utterly guilty and confused.

The ride back was silent except for the rumbling of the engine, and when they arrived, Tony caught Loki’s arm, chewing the inside of his cheek.

“Look,” Tony sighed. “I’m sorry about today. I wanted it to be a good day, I really did, I… I’m not sure where I went wrong, to be honest, but I… I hope you feel better?”

“The wedding isn’t off, if that’s what you’re worried about,” Loki spat softly. “You can still marry me.”

“Loki I-“

“Don’t worry, we’ll still be married so you don’t need to cancel all of your affairs. And yes, since you were so curious, Peter is available. Now goodnight Mr Stark,” Loki spat.

“Loki please-“

“I said, goodnight.”

Tony watched helplessly as Loki stormed up the steps to the manor, leaving him standing beside Peter in the falling twilight. Peter shifted nervously, unsure what to do or say, however he finally cleared his throat and murmured, “Thank you, Mr Stark, for the ride today. And I’m sorry it didn’t turn out better.”

“It’s not your fault, Pete,” Tony sighed, giving Peter a pat on the arm. “Hey, go cheer him up, alright? Oh, and Peter, I was reading this earlier but I figure you can smuggle it in, right? I was in the middle of it though so I might send Bucky by to pick it up in a few days, alright?”

Peter’s jaw dropped as Tony fished around in the back of the car, and then brought back *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, grinning as he handed it over.

“Take good care of it,” Tony murmured. “Now run along, I think Loki needs you.”

“I wouldn’t mind if you were the one who came to pick it up,” Peter suddenly declared shyly. “You know, so maybe we could talk about it.”

“Maybe,” Tony’s eyes glistened in the quickly dimming sunlight. “Perhaps.”

Peter couldn’t help a small smile from spreading on his face when the alpha sent him a grin, before the man hopped into his automobile and took off with a great cloud of dust and noise, leaving Peter

to slip the book under his shirt and dash off after Loki.

Chapter End Notes

Gasp! What do you think of the beginning of this revelation about Loki's first heat? And is Tony's approach with Peter and Loki good or bad?

Also thank you to lokislonleylady for helping me with figuring out relationship dynamics! Im having a good time figuring out how to slowly weave the various romantic relationships into this. Who are you currently shipping, if anyone? I look forward to your comments :)

I Am Not a Robot

Chapter Notes

So first off a huge thanks for all the comments on the last chapter! I'm getting this out a bit early as a thank you! It was interesting hearing your input to the relationships, and I am taking all of your ideas into consideration. Also another huge thank you to Lokislonleynlady for the ongoing support and ideas for this fic. It's truly appreciated! Enjoy :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*You've been acting awful tough lately
Smoking a lot of cigarettes lately
But inside, you're just a little baby
It's okay to say you've got a weak spot
You don't always have to be on top
Better to be hated
Than loved loved loved for what your not*

The manor was quiet, eerie almost. Peter knew that Odin was likely still engaged with his friends as Loki had earlier stated that after the tennis matches Odin and his friends often attended a banquet that ran long into the night. Peter suspect that Shuri had likely already returned home, assuming Shuri had been working at all (Peter hadn't seen her all day so perhaps she hadn't come in). Thor and Frigga had been absent all day, and although Frigga often remained in her chambers, Loki wondered distantly where Thor was.

Peter made his way into the darkened manor, trying not to jump at shadows. The sun was quickly setting outside, and the lamps were not lighted. Peter was tempted to softly call out Loki's name, but he thought better of it and instead hurried to slip the Verne book under his mattress in his room before making his way up the attic stairs. He frowned, though, when he did not find Loki there, so Peter hurried back down the stairs and then stood at the bottom, pondering what to do.

After several long moments of pondering, Peter began to make his way back to his room, deciding to sit there until he was retrieved, yet he paused when he heard voices from behind one of the doors on the third story. Normally Peter didn't believe in listening in to conversations, yet when he recognized both Frigga's and Loki's voices Peter hesitated, hardly daring to breathe as he stopped outside that room.

"My son," Frigga was saying, her voice no less powerful than it ever was, though Peter could hear an edge of pain behind her words. "I realize how difficult this is. I do realize it, yet know this, Loki. Everything your father is doing, is insisting upon, is because he truly believes it is the best possible outcome for you."

"And do you believe that?" Peter heard Loki's voice. To Peter's shock, there was an edge of desperation there that the boy had never heard before. There was something vulnerable in Loki's voice that Peter could have imagined during the omega's heat, yet Loki never permitted himself to sound so raw in front of Peter, even on the worst day of his heat. "Do you believe this is the best

for me?"

"Loki, I want you to be safe, and comfortable, and happy. Lord Stark can give you that life. You know he has a good heart, no matter how his actions may betray him. I know you care for him, Loki, and I know it is painful to hear that he may not return those same feelings. Yet there is a great power, and a great honor, in friendship. If he sees you as a dear friend, that is not something to scoff at. Do not turn away from such feelings, even if they are not romantic."

"But to live that sort of life? Hiding who he truly is each day, each night? How is that any better than.... than... than being some kind of kept omega? Are those affairs his secret, truly, or am I?" Loki demanded helplessly. "I admit, even when you refuse to, how society mocks and despises me. I have many secrets, but my essence, who I am truly, is something I have never hidden. I care not if they hate me, only if they respect that I am an individual, someone with a mind and thoughts. Yet if I carry through with this, am I not abandoning my last truth? Am I not abandoning the only thing left that allows me self dignity, self respect, an inkling as to who I truly am?"

"It is better to live a safe life, however unhappy, than to be unsure of where your next meal will come from and where you will have the ability to rest your head for the night. Do not turn your nose up at the privilege you have been bestowed in your life, Loki. I have raised you to carry out each day with dignity, it is true, but sometimes secrets are necessary for there to be anything of a safe life," Frigga sighed softly, her voice sounding weary at the end of her speech. "I know far better than you realize the type of pain of which you speak. But know this, my son. I want what is best for you, I love you more than nearly anyone else in this world. You and Thor are both my greatest treasures. I would give up everything for both of you, but do not give up everything yourself when you have no need. I can only protect you from your father's wrath so long as you carry through with this marriage. If you left Lord Stark, I fear how your father would react, especially now that you have Peter."

"Mother, I only got Peter to help me with my heat, and because I grew up being told that all nobles are allowed an omega," Loki insisted. "That is the only reason. There is no ulterior motive. During my heat he simply retrieved food and kept me clean. Yet first Tony and now you believe I have some ulterior motive for bringing Peter here, and you are both wrong! Perhaps, doing it again, I would not purchase an omega if everyone is to assume the worst, but to let him go now would be as good as a death sentence. A second hand omega is useless to the world, and even I cannot subject him to that fate. My first heat, it was a mistake! You know I believed myself to be a beta! I did not know! Does father not understand that I did not know? At that time he cared not what I did!"

"Loki, I realize that and for that reason whether or not he was an omega is less relevant than the fact that you bedded that omega out of wedlock. Yet still, even omegas who present late do not experience attraction for other omegas as you did when you believed yourself a beta. When you bedded him, you declared your attraction for omegas no matter what your designation. I realize your attraction for Lord Stark is real, but I cannot deny what your actions toward that other omega also imply," Frigga's voice sounded suddenly very tired, and Peter's jaw dropped. He had suspected something along those lines based on Tony's earlier words, but to hear the truth from Frigga was something else entirely. Suddenly Peter's heart was pounding and his collar was too tight and he felt the desperate need to escape before he was found listening to this conversation.

"I didn't know!" Loki was declaring desperately. "I am attracted to alphas, to Tony. That was just a moment's weakness!"

"It was not a weakness!" Frigga demanded. "We have discussed this before. Whoever you love, you are my son just the same."

“I love alphas,” Loki demanded. “I do.”

“Then so be it, but you are my son and I will always love you, no matter your choices of partners. Yet I cannot always protect you. If you leave Lord Stark word will circulate, gossip will arise, and your father will have no choice but to turn you out, no matter how much it pains him. Please, see reason and remain by Stark’s side. Please Loki, I only want to see you safe.”

“Alright, I will mother,” Loki’s voice was soft. “I’m sorry, thank you for speaking with me.”

“You will always be my little boy,” Frigga murmured. “I will always speak with you about anything you should desire.”

It was then that Peter crept away, his footsteps inaudible against the carpeted halls until he finally let himself into his room and collapsed against the wall, his chest aching with the secrets he’d heard.

Peter remained in his room all of that evening, curled up and reading Tony’s book. He was mildly disappointed when no one fetched him for dinner, but lunch had been filling and he didn’t want to stop reading anyway. Eventually he put out the candle at his bedside and did his best to fall asleep, yet Loki’s secrets kept rushing through Peter’s mind. Did people know? It sounded like it had been a scandal of some degree, did that contribute to why people disliked Loki so much? Did that contribute to Loki’s guarded, harsh personality? During his heat, Peter had seen something in Loki that was softer, though perhaps not kind. His voice, expressions, and tone had changed, and this other side of the omega was solidified further by the way Loki had spoken to his mother. It itched at Peter, wondering how far Loki’s secrets, truths, and lies stretched.

In the morning, Shuri was back and teasing Peter about how he looked half alive. Explaining that he hasn’t been able to sleep only led to further teasing about Peter’s outing with Loki and Tony, yet the teasing brought a smile to Peter’s face. That morning he helped serve breakfast and was unsurprised when Thor and Odin spoke excitedly about the fox hunt Thor had evidently been on the day before, while Loki silently nibbled at his toast. Once Odin and Thor were finished, Loki pushed his plate aside for Peter to take and silently headed for the library, Peter nibbling at his lip as he gazed after him.

“So,” Shuri asked once Peter was back in the kitchen, helping her to wash the dishes. “You have any plans for today?”

“Yes, I think I might spend time around Loki,” Peter murmured, chewing his lip at Shuri’s shocked laugh.

“With Loki?” Shuri chuckled. “Whatever for? Is he making you?”

“No, I just... want to,” Peter swallowed, lifting his chin and trying not to flinch at the look she gave him.

“Oh, come on, Peter,” Shuri rolled her eyes. “Do I need to drag you down to the village to knock some sense into you? Don’t tell me you’ve been spending so much time around ‘Master Odinson’ that you’re starting to actually like him.”

“I know how he seems but during the time I spent with him these few days it was... different. I think maybe he’s kinder than he seems. I want to try and help him, if I can,” Peter bit his lip, but Shuri’s look made him shift nervously.

“Peter,” Shuri asked, her voice growing serious as she lead him over to sit at the kitchen table.

“During his heat, Loki didn’t... didn’t touch you, did he? You didn’t... do anything with him? I’m just concerned about why suddenly now, after you spent his heat with him, that you’re suddenly changing your mind about him.”

“No, no of course not,” Peter shook his head. “It isn’t anything like what you’re implying. No, it’s just that he and I talked, really talked, and it was different, he was different than how he seems with other people. He was actually respectful of me, he was kind, and I think there is more going on beneath the surface than anyone realizes. But that reminds me... do you know anything about a scandal Loki was in?”

“Peter,” Shuri murmured seriously. “For your own sake, and because you’re my friend, I have to warn you. You’re right, Loki was in a scandal a few years ago. My brother told me about it. Odin has hushed it up well, but people still remember and speak of it behind closed doors. When Loki still believed himself to be a beta he became romantically involved with the son of a local land owner, and that son was an omega. Their relationship lasted over a year with no complications, and some believed that they would marry when Loki’s father permitted it. Things were going just fine, but then everything fell apart. Apparently they had agreed to secretly become... intimate, despite not yet having Odin’s approval for marriage, and apparently in the middle of it Loki went into heat.

“The other omega didn’t recognize Loki’s heat until they were done, and when he did realize he ran out in horror and shouted at Odin, declaring that Loki had disgraced his father’s name. Of course Odin pleaded for the incident to be kept quiet, but news still got out, and it was not long after that when Lord Stark became involved with Loki. It’s suspicious that it took nearly two years for Stark to finally declare that they’re fiancés, though, so a lot of people say that Loki is actually attracted to omegas. At the party, I heard whispers that people think that’s why Loki got you. That’s why I’m concerned. I don’t want to think that he’s pressuring you, or seducing you, but with you suddenly changing your opinion of him-“

“No,” Peter interrupted, frowning. “That isn’t true. I only got him food and ran baths for him, nothing like that happened. He isn’t doing anything of the kind.”

“Alright,” Shuri murmured, sighing. “Just be careful, alright? You know what they do to omegas like that.”

“He isn’t pressuring me,” Peter assured her. “I promise.”

“Fine,” Shuri nodded, standing. “Just stay safe, and careful. I have chores to do. Good luck with Loki.”

“Thank you,” Peter murmured, also standing and slowly making his way towards the library. Loki was back in his favorite armchair, reading some big dusty book volume, though he looked up slowly when Peter entered and he raised his eyebrows.

“Yes?” Loki asked slowly. “What do you want?”

“I don’t want anything,” Peter spoke slowly, biting his lip and sinking into the chair beside Loki. “Except I thought perhaps we could spend some time together. I was hoping that our truce didn’t have to start and stop every time you go into heat and come out of it.”

“Did you?” Loki drawled slowly, peering at Peter skeptically. “And why is that? What do you want from this?”

“Nothing,” Peter insisted softly. “I did notice that you were awfully quiet at breakfast.”

“So you wish to criticize me,” Loki frowned, sighing when Peter shook his head again.

“No, I just want to spend time with you,” Peter insisted. “Is that so hard to believe?”

“Yes,” Loki replied simply.

“Well it shouldn’t be,” Peter crossed his arms. “You were almost pleasant during your heat, and I think you could be again if you tried. I know we aren’t to talk like that if anyone is present, but who’s going to gossip about us now, the books?”

Loki rolled his eyes but he finally closed his book, leaning his chin on one hand and shrugging as he declared, “Alright, I will humor you. What do you wish to speak about.”

“Nothing in particular,” Peter admitted. “Anything, really. Perhaps we could talk about Lord Stark, though. Only if you want to! It’s just that I don’t understand. Everyone seems to think one way about you, and you just let it happen. I know you’re an Odinson, and I understand your position. That isn’t what I mean. You know what I mean, I know you do, and yet with Lord Stark you were different. I could see it in you, you were much more open. And yet your actions at the party...”

“Not all actions are logical,” Loki murmured, looking down. “Even if we wish them to be.”

“Why’d you do it, at the party? I mean you could have just pretended to be happy to be with Lord Stark, it would have been more befitting of an Odinson, and anyway you were so open with him that I feel you must care for him on some level, so why?”

“I don’t-“

“Need to explain your actions to me,” Peter interrupted, rolling his eyes as he finished the sentence he knew Loki was saying. “No, you don’t need to, it’s true. But if you’re willing then I’d like to know.”

“Tony could have just as easily pretended to be happy to be engaged to me, rather than running around with other omegas all night. He didn’t pretend anything of the sort. In fact he made his toast with a bit of red wine and within ten minutes I saw him kissing another omega on the cheek, happy to be out of my space and into someone else’s. Yes, I am an Odinson, and yes I am perfectly aware of the appropriate behavior expected of me, but I could not stand by and watch Stark doing what he was doing, to be let myself and my name be trampled upon like nothing more than pretty little daisies under someone’s boot.”

“Yet it would be easier if you hadn’t done anything,” Peter pressed.

“Preferable for people to despise who you are than to let yourself be swallowed up until there is nothing left,” Loki murmured.

“But if you acted as open with others as you are with me, now, then perhaps they could learn to appreciate your true self. You can be kind, humorous, and yet you bottle the good things away,” Peter firmly declared. “Not even Shuri understands who you are.”

“And she never will,” Loki snapped. “For I trust that you shall never tell her. Do you understand me, Peter?”

“But why?”

“Because I am Loki Odinson, and whether I am despised or not I have an image I must maintain. I realize that you may not understand such things,” Loki sniffed. “But I will not change that image

for anyone.”

“Except Tony and myself,” Peter murmured, his gaze calm and level. Loki blinked, pressing his lips into a thin line for a long moment.

“I am unwilling to commit to such a statement,” Loki finally murmured.

“You don’t have to verbally,” Peter’s voice was smug. “Because I already know the answer.”

“Do you know Hamlet?” Loki countered, lifting up the dusty book on his lap. “I’m currently trying to memorize all of Hamlet’s lines, just because I want to. Would you like to hear me rehearse?”

“Rehearse? Do you wish to be an actor?” Peter’s eyes widened.

“An Odinson cannot be an actor,” Loki’s nose wrinkle distastefully. “Now here, take the book and ensure I get all of the lines correct. I cannot be an actor, but I do enjoy the intellectual exercise of learning.”

“Right,” Peter nodded once, biting his lip to avoid a soft smile. “Okay, act three, scene one, action!”

As Loki spoke, Peter found himself lost in the soliloquy. Loki’s voice mixed the beautiful together into a thick, elegant, chocolatey sort of warmth that pulled Peter into the meaning and the passion promised behind the carefully quoted lines. There was again something within Loki that pulled at something within Peter, and when Loki finished the monologue, panting and eyes shining with tears, Peter couldn’t help but clap, beaming at Loki despite himself.

“That was incredible,” Peter promised him. “You really could be an actor, if you wanted to.”

Loki simply smiled and had Peter turn to another soliloquy.

Chapter End Notes

So there were some revelations here... What do you think of this new info about Loki?

Does this clear up any of his prior actions?

I’ve already written the next chapter and Tony comes back in, along with a ton of drama... I’m very excited to share it with all of you next week :-)

True Colors

Chapter Notes

Okay although nothing actually happens, I wanted to put a trigger warning here that a character has two close calls of non/con one of which does include nonconsensual touching. Again, no nonconsensual sex occurs, but the threat is present.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*In a world full of people
You can lose sight of it all
And the darkness inside you makes you feel so small

But I see your true colors shining through
I see your true colors*

For the rest of that day, and the next, Peter spent time helping Loki rehearse lines in the library. They were undisturbed by Odin or Thor, who evidently had taken to drinking and plotting the next fox hunt in the sitting room downstairs. Loki wasn't altogether friendly with Peter, yet their relative comradery put Peter in a good sort of mood, and even Shuri decided to leave off criticisms seeing as how Peter's mood had clearly gotten better ever since his relationship with Loki had begun improving. Peter knew Shuri didn't know what to make of it, but she still appeared happy for him, and she even began to smile at him and say hello if she came across him in the halls which clearly perplexed Loki who was used to Shuri despising him.

Finally the weekend rolled around and Peter was permitted to sleep in that Saturday morning. His first surprise met him when he wandered into the kitchen and found a small bowl of cold porridge and fruit sitting out on the kitchen table along with a slip of paper with his name on it. Peter savored the food, allowing it to fill up his rumbling belly before he washed the dishes and wandered into the dining room. His second shock of the morning came in the form of beautiful piano music floating through the air from the ballroom. The song was simple, yet it pulled at something inside of Peter and made him pause as he listened to the lovely, tender notes.

Curious, Peter crept inside, and his jaw dropped when he spotted Loki sitting there, eyes closed as his slender fingers ghosted over the piano keys. The song ebbed and flowed, and when it finally ended the room felt incredibly empty, so Peter filled the sudden silence with clapping. Loki jumped, spinning and taking a deep breath when he realized that Peter had been watching.

"That was amazing," Peter told him, making his way across the marbled floor. "I had no idea you could play the piano. That was beautiful."

"Thank you," Loki murmured, turning back to the keys. "I learned when I was a child and just never gave it up. My brother never had the temperament for music, but I enjoy allowing music to express that which words cannot."

"You must be in a good mood then," Peter chuckled. "Or perhaps a sort of happy, melancholy mood. It was beautiful, but sort of longing at the same time. I wish I could play the piano like that..."

Loki was silent for a moment, before he slowly slid to the side, looked up, and then murmured, “Would you like to learn?”

“You’d be willing to teach me?” Peter’s jaw dropped. “Now?”

“I see no better time than the present,” Loki replied. “Come, sit. I have a feeling your temperament is incredibly different than my brother’s. Perhaps Mozart would be best for you, but for now I can try to teach you the song I was just writing.”

“You wrote that?” Peter’s jaw dropped.

“Well, I came up with it. I haven’t actually put it down on any sheet music yet,” Loki explained, yet Peter’s shock was nearly tangible and Loki smirked, patting the piano bench beside him until Peter slowly sat.

“Here,” Loki explained, demonstrating the first few notes. “This is how the song begins. Now you try.”

Peter bit his lip and attempted the first stanza twice, and on the third time he got it right. The second and third stanzas were just as easy, but he tripped up on the fourth, making Loki laugh softly.

“No, no like this,” Loki explained, moving to place Peter’s hands in the correct position.

Peter’s fingers struggled to match the elegance of Loki’s, so the other omega leaned closer and carefully pressed Peter’s fingers to the keys, allowing Peter to understand the correct curvature of each finger, the right sound of each note. Loki remained patient as he explained the key changes, and when he asked Peter to play it back, the older omega broke out in a gleaming smile.

“See?” Loki murmured softly, turning his face so that his eyes could meet Peter’s. “You are a natural. Try the whole thing now, on your own.”

Peter bit his lip in concentration, took a deep breath, and then allowed himself to begin to play. His rendition wasn’t nearly as perfect as Loki’s, yet when his fingers came to rest on the last chord, Peter’s eyes shone.

“Peter, that was incredible,” Loki breathed. “I’ve never seen anyone pick it up that fast.”

“Perhaps you’re just a good teacher,” Peter replied, and Loki chuckled, nodding as his fingers hovered over Peter’s, ready to show him the next stanza.

“Perhaps,” Loki murmured. There was a pause as Loki moved to prepare to teach Peter the next bit, when the door to the ballroom banged open, startling both omegas. They turned simultaneously, and then Loki stiffened, pressing his back against the piano as a hard look settled upon his face. Beside him, Peter’s eyebrows pulled together, and he swallowed hard as he looked between Loki and the group of four alphas advancing into the room.

“Why hello!” A blonde man in the front declared, a salacious sort of grin upon his face which sent prickles up and down Peter’s spine. “Fancy seeing you here, Lokes. Who’s your friend? I heard you got an omega but I didn’t realize he’d look like that. What’s your name, beautiful?”

“Hey, come on,” a red haired man beside him laughed and clapped him on the back, chuckling loudly. “Don’t worry, kid. Fandral makes eyes at all the new omegas, doesn’t he Loki?”

Loki stiffened further, frowning as he declared, “So, it’s time for the next fox slaughter, is it? At

this rate there won't be any left in England."

"If we run out of foxes there are always other things to hunt," the woman on the end glared at Loki, but the omega didn't back down and simply crossed his arms, sitting up straighter.

"So," the red haired man cleared his throat, clearly uncomfortable with the level of tension in the room. "What is your name, kid?"

"Peter," the omega did his best to make his voice strong, despite the way he ducked his head either as a sign of respect or as a way to stop the uncomfortable eye contact Fandral was giving him.

"So you are Peter," the dark haired alpha on the other end of the group murmured. "Thor tells us of you. Do you ever plan on accompanying one of our hunts?"

"Yes, Sif's omega usually trails after the dogs but evidently she now has a broken leg. We're using mine today, but somehow I suspect that fox hunting isn't tasteful to my omega. My wager is that her stomach will give out the moment we are victorious!" Fandral declared. "But I suspect you might have more... stamina, hm?"

"Peter will not accompany any of you," Loki spat softly. "Peter is my omega, and he does not leave my side."

"Oh, is he now?" Was the response, chuckles erupting from various members of the group. "And you believe that you can sway Thor's mind if we decide to bring the new omega along?"

"Peter is mine, not Thor's," Loki repeated, glaring and standing up to his full height, Peter following suit. "I have final say over what he does."

"Oh please," Sif rolled her eyes. "As if you have any say over your brother. Come here, Peter. I wish to get a better look at you. If you're to accompany one of our hunts you need to be able to hop fences and fallen trees."

Peter balked, looking to Loki nervously, unsure who he was meant to listen to in this scenario. Loki's jaw was set and he swallowed hard before he shook his head again.

"No," Loki repeated, crossing his arms. "He remains at my side. He is my omega. I got him with my own money. Thor has no say over him. You all certainly have no right to tell him what to do."

"We have every right," Sif spat, growing angry, her eyes flashing despite the way the red haired man placed a hand on her shoulder and stepped forward.

"I thought your brother had made your place perfectly clear," the man's voice was kinder, and yet it held an edge that made Peter uneasy. "Come now, let us see him."

"No," Loki repeated, yet Fandral simply rolled his eyes and began to approach anyway. Loki's eyes widened when Fandral stalked closer and allowed his fingers to brush up Peter's bicep and over his left shoulder blade, and Loki's voice lost his confidence as he repeated, "I said no!"

"What's going on in here?" A voice at the doorway declared, and Loki relaxed when Tony and Thor wandered in, observing the situation with frowns on their faces. Fandral froze, clearing his throat and stepping back when Tony moved to stand beside Peter, his eyes flashing.

"My friends," Thor chuckled uneasily, gazing at the group in apparent confusion. "What are you doing? I thought you were preparing for the hunt?"

“We were,” the red haired man confirmed. “We were considering the idea that Peter should join us.”

“Oh, a lovely idea!” Thor clapped his hands, a smile returning to his face. “Peter, I am sure you would love the hunt. Yes, come with us today! The fresh air will be wonderful! I much look forward to your lively spirit this afternoon when we are victorious. We can do a proper blooding, and you can begin the join us on all of our hunts! Perhaps you can even be the one to throw the fox to the dogs!”

“I’m afraid that won’t be possible,” Tony chuckled, clapping a hand around Peter’s shoulders. “See, I wished to speak with both Peter and Loki today! I’m sure you’ll get along fine without him.”

“Oh... Well that’s alright then,” Thor shrugged, equally happy with this outcome. “But perhaps another time, yes? I suspect you’d have a wonderful time on a hunt, don’t you Peter?”

“Perhaps, my lord...” Peter hesitated, refusing to meet any of the alphas’ eyes besides Thor’s. “I am unsure.”

“Well, one of these days I suspect we can make your mind sure,” Thor replied kindly, however his eyebrows drew together as he studied Peter’s face, and then concern crept into the man’s eyes. “It is nothing to be concerned about, you realize... You’d be a proper member of our group! Perhaps you don’t have the stomach, though... you needn’t look so pale, it isn’t as if you’re the one being hunted!”

Peter simply swallowed, biting the inside of his cheek.

“Well,” Thor continued, studying Peter for a moment more before smiling at Tony. “I suspect we can continue our conversation later, yes? I do want to know all about your new machine. It sounded fascinating! I have never heard of such modern thinking, it is truly exciting! In any case, come along my friends. There is no need to pursue having Peter join us if Tony requires him today. In fact, perhaps it is best Peter never join us if he doesn’t have the stomach. It ruins the sport when the omega throws up his lunch at the end, yes? Don’t worry, Peter, you needn’t join us if you do not wish to. Anyway, come along. Goodbye brother, I shall tell you all about it tonight!”

The other alphas gave Peter lingering looks, and Loki didn’t let his shoulders relax until they were all gone and the door shut behind them. Once they were out of the room, the smile dropped off Tony’s face and he turned to the omegas, looking them over quickly.

“Are you both alright?” He asked, looking first Peter over and then Loki. “Thor and I were just discussing my idea for a flying machine when we heard you shout. Nothing happened, did it?”

“I can take care of myself,” Loki spat softly, glaring at Tony. “I don’t need you believing that you’re swooping in and saving anyone like some sort of fantasy hero. I am not your damsel in distress.”

“Thank you,” Peter interrupted Loki, breathing a soft sigh of relief and offering Tony a half bow. “Perhaps we did not need your assistance, but I appreciate it just the same.”

“What were you doing down here, anyway?” Tony asked, glancing between the two. “Loki, didn’t you know there was a hunt today? Shouldn’t you be upstairs?”

“I can do as I like,” Loki replied stiffly. “And I wished to play the piano. Anyway, I was aware you would be visiting today as well.”

“Indeed? I didn’t know you still played the piano,” Tony raised his eyebrows. “I thought you’d given that up.”

“There is plenty that you do not know,” Loki replied. There was a stiff moment of silence, before Peter cleared his throat and spoke up again.

“Loki was teaching me,” Peter explained quickly, offering a gentle smile. “He was teaching me a song that he wrote.”

“Really?” Tony looked surprised. “And did you learn very much?”

“Perhaps you should be the judge of that,” Peter smirked, turning towards the piano but softly asking Loki, “May I?”

For a moment, Loki appeared taken off guard, but then he nodded, stepping to the side to watch as Peter took a deep breath, running his fingers along the keys. After it appeared that he’d gathered himself, Peter took one more deep breath and then began to play. For the moment that it took for Peter to regurgitate the notes that he’d learned, it was like the world stood still. Then, the moment he was done, Tony was clapping and leaving Loki to look both impressed and annoyed.

“That was beautiful!” Tony declared, patting Peter’s back enthusiastically. “You just learned that today? Unbelievable! I can only imagine how good you could become with further practice! You must keep working, Peter. You could be a great talent.”

“So,” Loki interrupted. “What did you wish to speak to us both about?”

“Ah, of course,” Tony broke into a smile. “Come, let’s all sit, shall we? Loki, Peter, I wanted to ask you both if you’d like to accompany me to a play? Some of my friends will be performing on the West End and I thought perhaps you would enjoy seeing them and then attending the after party with me for some drinks.”

“Really?” Peter’s eyes widened. “That’d be amazing, wouldn’t it? That’s just like you-“

“We will accompany you,” Loki interrupted, glaring harshly at Peter. “When?”

“Tomorrow night,” Tony smiled. “It’ll be incredible fun, I’m sure. Apparently the play is a bit scandalous but it’s getting very good reviews from the artist community. I’m not sure we need to mention the name of the play to your father though, hm my love?”

“Perhaps I will not if you don’t,” Loki replied, and Peter wasn’t sure but he thought he might have seen a twinkle in Loki’s eye. There was a moment of silence before Tony clapped his hands and smiled.

“It’s settled then!” Tony declared. “Loki, would you like to play some more music for us? I’d like to speak with Peter about... a book I’ve read.”

Tony’s eyes twinkled, and Peter broke into a smile, nodding. It was clear to Loki that he was missing some piece of the puzzle, however he slowly retreated to the piano and began to play as Tony and Peter spoke about the Verne book, Tony divulging plans and ideas for true underwater modes of transportation. Peter found himself fascinated and soaked in by Tony’s words, adding his own ideas and even calling upon calculations he’d secretly learned from books he’d ‘borrowed’ from his school’s headmistress’ office. Their conversation went on long into the afternoon, their tea from tea time growing cold. Eventually Tony looked down at his pocket watch and sighed softly when he noticed the time. Clapping his hands together, Tony stood and gave Peter a wide grin.

“Well!” Tony declared and Loki finished up with a sonata. “This afternoon has proved incredibly entertaining. We should really do this more often. Speaking of, though, I believe you have something for me?”

“Yes, I’ll go get it,” Peter nodded, scampering away to grab the book from under his mattress. He hesitated while in his room, considering his options, before he nodded and grabbed something else, returning downstairs. When he got there he found that Loki had disappeared, so he handed Tony his book, and then nervously also handed over an envelope.

“I have a favor to ask of you,” Peter murmured, trying not to sound too nervous. “I have an aunt in London. I used to write to her regularly but ever since coming here I have been unable to get a letter out. May you please send this for me?”

“Of course,” Tony nodded, taking the letter and slipping it into his coat pocket. “And I shall provide my address as a return address and deliver any letters she writes to you.”

“Really?” Peter brightened. “Thank you!”

“Think nothing of it,” Tony smiled. “I shall see you again soon, Peter.”

When Tony reached for Peter’s hand and pressed a kiss to it, Peter blushed lightly but let him, nodding once before watching him go on his way.

Peter eventually found Loki upstairs in his bedroom, flipping through his book of sonnets. He simply looked up when Peter entered, before returning to his reading.

“Loki,” Peter murmured, moving to sit on the bed beside him. “Was today alright? I’m sorry if that was upsetting to you.”

“What part? Thor’s idiotic friends or you cozying up to my fiancé?” Loki flipped a page in his book.

“Well... both I suppose,” Peter flushed. “Those are your brother’s friends?”

“Yes,” Loki sighed. “Through thick and thin. I always preferred Tony, though Fandral appeared to take a liking to me from a young age. He was thrilled when I presented as an omega. He is decent in bed but a menace out of it.”

“Oh,” Peter’s voice was a bit too small. “You, uh, know what he’s like in bed, then.”

“Every omega in the county does,” Loki sighed, turning another page in his book. “I’m certain you’re his next conquest, and seeing as how you seem to idolize alphas after your finishing school I suspect he’ll be successful, but you’re far too good for him.”

“Am I?” Peter raised his eyebrows, smirking lightly.

“Everyone is too good for him,” Loki clarified quickly.

“But you bedded him,” Peter pointed out.

“It was necessary. He owned a signed copy of a book I enjoy, a book which is now mine,” Loki raised his chin.

“You bedded him for a book?” Peter asked skeptically.

“A signed book,” Loki countered.

“Right,” Peter shook his head, chuckling softly. “Well you should know that I have no such plans of interacting with let alone partnering with that alpha. If I had my way I’d never see him again.”

“So you’re not charmed by his roguish good looks and snobbish disposition?” Loki huffed.

“Why would I be? I already have a snob right here to charm me,” Peter teased, grinning at Loki and laughing softly when the other omega made a swipe for him with his pillow.

“You’re a brat,” Loki chuckled, successfully hitting Peter with his pillow, and Peter broke into a laugh.

“So are you,” Peter replied smugly. He laughed for a moment, grinning from ear to ear, before his smile faded and he spoke again. “I’m also sorry about how I was with Tony today.”

“You are not to blame,” Loki shook his head. “It’s unsurprising. You and Tony have a similar interest in things, I am glad you can share those interests together. I care not for machines and iron. But you do, and Tony does, so that is good.”

“I don’t only care for those things,” Peter sat a little closer. “I also like poetry, and music. I even liked your Shakespeare.”

“You have many interests,” Loki murmured, looking up to meet Peter’s eyes, and Peter chuckled, shrugging.

“I think mostly my interest is in people,” the omega smiled. “I like Tony, and I like you.”

“You like too easily,” Loki turned away. “You trust too easily.”

“I disagree,” Peter replied. “I think you don’t trust easily enough.”

“Perhaps we are both right,” Loki turned back to Peter. “Perhaps.”

Loki found himself a little too close to Peter, and he leaned away, pushing his hair back with a sigh and leaning against the headboard, fiddling with his pillow.

“That song you wrote,” Peter spoke a moment later, pulling Loki out of his distraction. “It sounded like a love song. Was it for Tony?”

“It wasn’t for anyone,” Loki spoke, looking down. “It was for myself.”

“Every song is for someone,” Peter pushed. “Anyway it doesn’t matter. It was really pretty.”

“Thank you,” Loki murmured. “And thank you for everything, Peter. I believe I’ve said it before, but I do not know anyone like you.”

“Thank you, as well, for today,” Peter replied. “For keeping them from taking me.”

“Tony kept them from taking you,” Loki argued, but Peter shook his head.

“No,” he stated. “You did. Thank you, truly. I don’t know why you did it, but thank you.”

“I dislike those who believe they can rule over someone else’s life,” Loki murmured, sighing deeply. “You are too good for any of them. They do not deserve you.”

“You ruled over my life,” Peter pointed out.

“Have I ever claimed to like myself?” Loki huffed.

“I like you,” Peter replied. “Truly, I do.”

“Thank you,” Loki’s voice was paper thin. “I like you too, Peter.”

It was only a sentence, but it sounded like a promise.

That night there was a chill in the house, and Peter had to huddle under his blankets to stay warm. He felt oddly lonely, but he pushed the feeling aside and eventually he drifted off to a land of dreams. They were all good dreams, until suddenly he awoke with a gasp, an odd pain stabbing into his stomach. Peter whined, curled up and disoriented as he did his best to get his bearings. For a moment he thought he was back at school, but then his vision came to him with a sickening, spinning clarity, and Peter tried not to retch. For a moment he thought he was sick, maybe something he ate, yet his stomach sank when he realized the truth. He had gone into heat far before he’d expected himself to.

Peter’s hands scrambled at the blankets which suddenly felt too warm and his hand slipped against the wall as he tried to stand on trembling legs before he fell back into bed with a whimper. For a moment, Peter could only lay there panting, his breaths coming and going with an unsteady wheeze, yet just as he was almost ready to stand and run somewhere, he knew not where, there was a knock on the door. Immediately, Peter froze and pulled his blankets up, his heart leaping into his throat as he softly called out, “Who’s there?”

When the door to the room creaked open, Odin was revealed to be leaning against the door frame, an odd sort of look in his eyes. Peter pulled the blankets up further and he swallowed incredibly hard. Peter felt his skin prickle uncomfortably when the silence stretched on for far too long, so to fill the void Peter nervously cleared his throat.

“Master Odin,” Peter’s voice squeaked slightly. “Can I... can I help you?”

“I wanted to ensure that you were alright,” Odin’s voice had an odd sort of tone to it, and Peter pulled the blankets higher when the man stepped into his room, slipping the door shut behind himself. “I thought I heard you calling out in your sleep. Are you alright Peter?”

“I... yes sir,” Peter hands clutched at his blanket, pressing his back against the headboard as Odin advanced further into his room. “I’m alright, I promise! Everything is... is fine, I... I apologize, M’lord.”

Peter broke off with a soft hiss, pressing his eyes closed for a moment, and when they opened he jumped and flinched in shock at seeing Odin now standing beside him, peering down at him.

“You’re in pain,” Odin murmured, his voice gentle, laced with something close to concern, yet Peter flinched back as far as he could when the back of one of the man’s hand traced against his cheek. “You’re in heat.”

“I’m fine,” Peter insisted, forcing a dry swallow down his throat and doing his best to set a hard look upon his face. “M’lord, I promise I’m fine.”

“Hush, I know you are hurting, but you need not bear this alone. I can help you,” Odin’s voice was still gentle, kind, yet Peter’s stomach dropped sickly and he felt bile creeping up his throat.

“I don’t need help,” Peter insisted softly, now pressed against both the headboard and the wall next to his bed as Odin sat on his bedside and leaned closer.

“Nonsense,” Odin murmured, gently shaking his hand and carding his hand through Peter’s hair gently. “I help all who are loyal to this family, all who come to work at Odin Manor. You’ll be alright, Peter, I will help you.”

“Father?”

Both Odin and Peter were startled when Peter’s door banged open, and Peter peered past Odin and found Loki standing there, looking between his father and Peter with wide, confused eyes. “Peter, what’s going on?”

“Son,” Odin stood, holding his hands out in a peace offering. “I am helping your servant, he is in pain.”

“No...” Loki breathed his response, a ghost of warm air from between his lips. He stood frozen for a moment, but then Loki stalked into the room, maneuvering Odin so that he stood close enough to grab his father or servant. “That won’t be necessary. I can help Peter. You need not trouble yourself, father.”

“It is no trouble. The Odin name represents helping those who cannot help themselves,” Odin’s chuckle was kind, gentle, yet slowly a frown replaced his paternal smile. “Anyway, how could you possibly think to help Peter, my son?”

“The same as he helped me in my heat,” Loki’s reply was stiff. “We do not need your assistance.”

“Indeed?” Odin’s voice was suddenly hard, and Peter wasn’t sure when his face had suddenly changed to appearing so angry. “And what of positions? What of propriety? Are you not my son, and he your servant? And yet you presume to assist him as he has been bought to assist you?”

“It is no trouble, father,” Loki’s voice grew harder. He stood up straighter and did his best not to flinch when his father approached him, a deep frown set on his face. Pushing on, Loki added, “It would entertain me to do so.”

“Then you’d best find better entertainment,” Odin spat softly. “Because this act of caring does not suit you, my son.”

“But that is where you are wrong,” Loki suddenly spat back, hardening his jaw. “It is not an act.”

Peter felt himself reel backwards when he spotted Odin’s hand preparing to hit Loki, yet Loki did not so much as flinch when his cheek snapped to the side, his hair falling into his face as he glared at his father. For a moment it was a battle of endurance, neither father nor son willing to back down from their glares, but then finally Odin took a step back, pushing his own hair back.

“You disgrace your family name,” Odin spat softly. “You are an Odinson, and yet you bow to the whims of a servant?”

“Does the name Odin not represent helping those who cannot help themselves?” Loki asked stiffly.

“Indeed,” Odin sniffed. “I have told you that for many years, and yet you refused to listen to my words, too much concerned with propriety. Yet you choose this moment to heed the lessons I have taught you since you were a child?”

“I’m doing what you taught me,” Loki insisted. “I am.”

“You are serving no one but yourself,” Odin shook his head. “I trust that you understand your actions, yes? I trust that you will be cautious, you will not disgrace this name further. Omegas are

disposable and servants are easy to quiet, but if you have any needs being left unmet I will retrieve a beta servant for you, not this one. Do not forget your place. And if I see any sign of such actions, if I see any sign of what you know I speak, you will both be left to the streets of London with nothing more than the clothes on your back. Am I understood?"

"Yes, father," Loki spat softly. "But you have taught me too well for that."

"Good," Odin's shoulder stiffened. "Do not disappoint me."

There was a long pause, yet finally Odin straightened his coat and then finally turned away, his cane a soft tap against the floorboards outside Peter's room, eventually fading when the man closed the door at the end of the hall. Within moments, Loki's arms were around Peter and the boy began to cry, though for what reason he couldn't place.

"Hush," Loki's voice was gentle, his arms warm around Peter's trembling frame. "You're alright. No one will hurt you, you are safe. Hush, Peter, you're alright. No one can hurt you, you are safe now. You are safe."

The soft mantra was an incredible comfort, and Peter allowed himself to press closer to Loki's warmth, his head nestled against Loki's shoulder as he softly sobbed against his neck. Peter didn't flinch when Loki's hand pressed tenderly to the back of his neck, a gentle promise that Peter didn't have to worry, that Peter wasn't alone. They sat like that for a long time, until Peter's sobs trailed off into soft whimpers, then hiccups, then silence. Still Loki held him, and Peter's tense muscles relaxed slowly.

"Are you alright now?" Loki's voice startled Peter lightly, and he leaned back to meet Loki's dark eyes. For a long moment they simply gazed at each other, but then Peter nodded, biting the inside of his lip.

"I'm alright," Peter murmured. "Thank you. I thought..."

"Hush, it doesn't matter, you're safe," Loki gently interrupted him. "You're alright. I won't leave you."

"Thank you," Peter murmured again, his voice ghosting across Loki's lips. For a long moment, they were incredibly close, their eyes locked upon each other, their noses nearly touching, and then Peter was leaning forward, and for only a moment there was something soft, something incredibly tender as soft lips pressed against his own, but then there was a hand on his chest and Loki was pushing him away, his eyebrows drawn together as he shook his head.

"Peter," Loki frowned, concern growing on his face. "What are you doing? We can't, please, it's wrong."

"It's not," Peter murmured. "Or at least I don't care."

"We can't," Loki repeated. "You heard my father."

"You don't want to?" Was Peter's soft reply, and Loki hesitated at that question.

"You're in heat, you aren't thinking straight," Loki swallowed hard. "You will wake up in a few days and remember this with a frown on your face."

"That isn't true," Peter murmured. "I refused your father, but I don't want to refuse you."

"Peter please," Loki murmured, shaking his head. "We cannot, not while you're in heat. I can't do

that. Please. You'll wake up and this will all be like a bad dream."

"It won't," Peter insisted, yet Loki turned his head away and pressed his eyes shut for a long moment.

"Just rest," he finally spoke. "Please Peter. Just rest, and when it is over then perhaps we can discuss, if you even so much as remember this moment."

"I will," Peter replied softly. "I won't forget. And this wasn't a mistake. You know as well as I that it isn't so hard to think straight as the alphas would have people believe."

"Perhaps," Loki murmured. "But please, just rest now and I will take care of you."

And so Peter nodded and curled back in Loki's arms, allowing himself to drift back into sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you to lokislonleyleady for helping me so much with ideas. (Seriously, you're awesome)

What do you all think of Odin, Tony, Thor, and Thor's friends? All are varying sorts of alphas that Peter is having to try and navigate while staying safe...

Also what's your opinion on the Loki/Peter development here? Or even just Loki's development as a person for that matter! As always, I hope you enjoyed the chapter and I look forward to your comments :)

Happy

Chapter Notes

Okay I want to say a huge thank you for the comments last chapter. I'm so glad you're all enjoying the story, and I hope you like this chapter as well :)

Also, just a side note, I highly recommend listening to the song Happy by Marina (it's where the lyrics at the beginning of this chapter are from). It's such a beautiful and relaxing song that I thought fit Loki's transformation incredibly well.

Beta:lokislonleylady

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*I realize to be happy
Maybe I need a little company
So now you know, you know it all
That I've been desperately alone...
I found what I'd been looking for in myself
Found a life worth living for someone else
Never thought that I could be
Happy*

Peter slept long into the day, only waking when the ache in his belly forced his eyes open. He was confused, for a moment, but a solid, warm presence next to him made Peter focus on the person he was curled up against.

“Hello,” Loki’s voice was a soft, teasing chuckle. “You sleep long enough yet?”

Peter blinked, slowly realizing that Loki had managed to squeeze into his little bed. It was cramped, yet the closeness was comfortable. Belatedly, Peter realized he rather liked the arm that Loki had draped around his shoulders. In fact, Peter was curled against him, and the warmth it brought put a smile on Peter’s face.

“Yes, thank you,” Peter murmured, his voice softer than he’d meant it to be. “I didn’t realize you’d actually stay.”

“Well the alternative was going to Stark’s lousy play this afternoon and pretend to be interested in what alphas consider scandalous, and frankly I wasn’t in the mood,” Loki rolled his eyes.

“Anyway, I’ve got food for you. The tea might have gone cold so I can get more. The other food should still be good though. Toast and marmalade sound alright?”

Loki plucked the item from a tray sitting on Peter’s bedside table, and the boy eagerly snatched it, gobbling it down in hopes of filling his ravenous stomach.

“Well,” Loki chuckled. “You are hungry! Here’s some chicken sandwiches. Shuri helped me put them together since I must say cooking isn’t my strong point.”

“You worked with Shuri?” Peter asked in shock, his mouth full.

“The cook’s son is sick so she had to stay home, and Shuri is plenty happy to do what she can to

help you with your heat,” Loki explained, handing over another sandwich.

“I mean... she’s my friend, so I’m not surprised by that. I’m just surprised because, well, I wasn’t sure the two of you got along,” Peter flushed, but Loki simply rolled his eyes.

“Shuri and my brother are much better suited in most ways, but it seems a little bird has been saying good things about me, despite being asked not to,” Loki gave Peter a look that made the boy shrivel slightly. Loki ignored him and continued to speak. “It seems Shuri is willing to give me a second chance. I figured I could do my best not to disappoint her.”

“I’ll have to tell her thank you,” Peter murmured, eyes trailing up from his sandwich. “And I should also say thank you to you for staying, and doing all of this. You really didn’t have to, and I didn’t expect you to.”

“You shouldn’t thank me,” Loki’s eyes focused on his hands clasped in his lap. “You truly shouldn’t.”

“And why is that?” Peter murmured. “You’ve brought me food, and tea, and you were kind to my friend even when I know the two of you typically don’t get along. So why should I not thank you?”

“You know as well as I,” Loki’s voice was bitter, and left Peter peering at Loki curiously. “All of this makes up for nothing. One can have a gilded cage and still be a prisoner. But then I would hardly call any of this gilded. No, all of this is a cage, plain and simple. And thanking me changes none of it.”

“Loki,” Peter murmured, his voice sounding distant even to himself. When he reached over to touch Loki’s hands, the other omega flinched away, glaring at Peter hard enough that the boy sighed and instead pulled his knees to his chest. “I don’t blame you, at least not anymore.”

“Well maybe you should,” Loki replied bitterly. “Because last night my father could have done something unthinkable, and you would have had no defense against him.”

“I’m not defenseless,” Peter glared at Loki, crossing his arms. “And anyway that isn’t your fault. I... Lord Odin is... Well you cannot control your father’s actions.”

“But I could have never bought you in the first place,” Loki spat, finally turning his eyes up to glare at Peter. “I could have never brought anyone else into this, but I didn’t because I’m selfish and you know it as well as everyone else does.”

“It’s not selfish to want a friend,” Peter murmured.

“I didn’t buy you to be my friend,” Loki growled.

“Perhaps,” Peter replied sharply. “But one’s intentions of the past doesn’t have to shape their future.”

“We are the culmination of our past,” Loki shot back. “Besides, how do you know my intentions have changed at all? You are my servant, and I your master, nothing more.”

“Perhaps if you say it enough you’ll start to believe it again, hm?” Peter’s eyes were a little too cocky, and Loki glared at him for a long moment before the older omega sighed deeply and ran a hand over his face.

“I do believe that,” Loki growled. “And you’re walking a thin line.”

“Did you know that we were taught how to walk a tightrope in my school? Good for your posture, good for balance,” Peter quipped. “I suggest you do the same before your father starts to point out your posture, because I’ve noticed that you’re beginning to slouch.”

Loki gazed at Peter for a long moment, his face unreadable, before he handed Peter the cold tea and murmured, “I think heating this will be unnecessary. Your cheekiness should be enough to set this ablaze.”

“You sure you just don’t feel like getting up?” Peter smirked.

“Shut up,” Loki replied, something close to laughter in his eyes as he added, “I stayed home from the play to avoid drama.”

“With you, I’m not certain avoiding drama is possible,” Peter replied, taking a sip of the tea. It wasn’t quite cold yet. “You were clearly born for the stage... So why don’t you pursue it, because of your father?”

“I already told you, the stage is not an appropriate place for an Odinson,” Loki sniffed. “It matters not what I wish, only what is right.”

“Because of your father?” Peter guessed, yet Loki rolled his eyes and shook his head.

“Partly, but also I was brought into this family and I must play this role. I may have been the son of a maid and a traveling medicine man but I am now an Odinson and I will take my title seriously. My past doesn’t matter, I will be the son father always needed for this house, even when Thor throws money about for fast horses and shiney firearms,” Loki made a soft noise that clearly showed his disgust for how his brother spent the family money, yet he paused when Peter curled up due to a roll of pain. When the boy curled up a little tighter, Loki paused and focused instead on rubbing Peter’s back until the pain had passed.

“What do you mean by traveling medicine man?” Peter finally asked when he was able to speak.

“I’m not certain,” Loki admitted. “I have heard rumors that my father worked with local herbs that were said to be remedies for various ailments, and that he went to London to sell his wares. Evidently once he went to London and did not return, and it wasn’t long later than my mother grew sick and Odin took me in. I know little of my real parents, for mother and father don’t like to speak of it. Anyway it doesn’t matter. Mother and Father raised me, took me in instead of allowing me to starve on the streets as a baby. The least I can do in gratitude is be the son that Thor is not.”

“I’m sorry you lost your true parents,” Peter murmured, yet Loki shook his head.

“Mother and father are my true parents. They’ve been kind to me, and I... I have complaints of course, but I am proud to be their son, truly, even though I have made many mistakes. I realize though, now, that I know nothing of your family. Do you... do you have a family, Peter?”

“No,” Peter broke off in a whimper, curling up a little closer to Loki and holding his middle. Loki bit his lip and resumed rubbing Peter’s back, holding him until the boy stopped shivering and was again able to open his eyes. When he did, Peter was panting. The look on Loki’s face quickly schooled into disdain, but Peter smirked because he’d seen the concern on the man’s face before Loki had realized Peter was looking.

“That’s not completely true,” Peter continued once the pain had passed on again. “I lost my parents as I child and I hardly remember them. They were caught up in a fire, I’m told. I began living with my aunt and uncle when I was a baby. They were always amazing, and when I turned eight I went

to work in the factory with my uncle.”

“Eight?” Loki suddenly interrupted, his eyebrows drawing together. “When you turned eight? You began to work in a factory when you were that young?”

“It’s not so young as all that,” Peter crossed his arms. “The boy who was in charge of cleaning out the furnace was only six. Anyway, I worked there with my uncle until I presented as an omega and then I was forced to stop. I began to help my aunt at work best I could, she’s a barmaid in a pub. But then I... about a year later a man came, he was my uncle’s friend and... Well...”

“Peter?” Loki’s voice was far gentler than Peter had ever heard before. The boy brought his eyes up to meet Loki’s, and he shocked the older omega with the tears shining in his eyes.

“He told us Ben was dead. My Uncle Ben had been caught up in the machinery and there was no one there to stop it, to notice, to save him. I always worked by his side and if I’d been there I... I could’ve... but I wasn’t and he died, Loki, he... he was gone, just like that. He just never came home. Just like mum and da, he never came home...”

There was a long pause during which Peter sat silently, allowing Loki to rub his back and look at a loss for words. Yet as soon as his spell had started, Peter snapped out of it and placed a smile back on his face, moving on as if nothing had happened.

“Anyway,” Peter continued. “Aunt May and I found ways to move on, except without Ben’s money she couldn’t really afford to feed me, and I was too young to truly help in the pub and make money. So she found that school to enrol me in, and I left.”

“And your aunt?”

“She still works in the pub,” Peter explained simply. “Probably always will, except it gets harder for her to work the long hours, and I suspect she no longer receives coins as tips, though she won’t say as much in her letters.”

“Letters?” Loki asked, and Peter flushed.

“Oh,” Peter chuckled nervously. “Yes, I used to send her letters from my school...”

“After your school you hoped to marry an alpha,” Loki murmured softly. “And send home money. That’s right, isn’t it? That’s why you need an alpha. That’s why you wanted to marry and were so distraught about all this.”

“Well, it’s one of the reasons,” Peter chuckled softly, gazing around at his simple room, and Loki also chuckled, nodding.

“Point taken,” Loki murmured. “I cannot give you more than this. And I cannot change how the world sees you. But I can change how I see you, and with Stark you’ll be respected. Once he and I are married you need no longer act.”

“Thank you,” Peter murmured. “And I do mean that, because despite everything you’ve done kind things for me.”

“I’m only replaying your favors,” Loki insisted, but Peter simply smiled and snuggled closer. They were silent for a moment, Peter’s head slowly rising and falling with each breath Loki took. They sat like that for a few minutes, a strange feeling of safety accompanying the arm around his shoulders. Peter closed his eyes, relaxing to Loki’s soft humming until the older omega broke off and began to speak. “Your aunt, May you said? Do you wish to still send letters?”

“Well I already did,” Peter admitted. “I sent one out with Lord Stark.”

“Clever boy,” Loki chuckled. “That’s probably for the best, though I can attempt to get some out for you as well. You miss her, don’t you? When did you see her last?”

“Before I went to school,” Peter admitted. “I promised her I would return for her when I got married, that my alpha and I would return and visit her, but I realize that cannot be.”

“No, your alpha and you cannot,” Loki bit his lip, and then broke into a grin. “But your omega and you can.”

“What?” Peter turned, his eyebrows drawing together. “What do you mean?”

“You’d like to visit her, wouldn’t you?” Loki’s voice was a hushed whisper. “You’d like to travel to London and visit her? And so why don’t we? When your heat is over.”

“You and me travel to London to visit my aunt? Loki, why would we do that?” Peter shook his head, both shocked and confused. “Why would you do that?”

“Because you want to,” Loki urged. “And it must be hard to be away from her for so long when you care for her. You’ve done so much for me, Peter, I am simply returning the favor. And anyway I rather think it would be nice to get off of this estate for once.”

Peter hesitated, chewing his lip and pondering this strange turn of events. He didn’t see a downside, and here tucked up against Loki’s side it felt somehow only right that this should be offered. Yet still, Peter was cautious and confused about why, and so he studied Loki closely. It was hard to read the man. His face hid everything, yet his eyes held something that Peter almost didn’t recognize because it was so foreign in the other omega. He realized only after thinking hard that what he was seeing was happiness. Loki, curled up in this serving boy’s bed in a musty room planning a likely forbidden trip to the slums of London, was happy for the first time since Peter had met him.

The warmth in those eyes sent an odd little glimmer of satisfaction through Peter, and finally the boy nodded once.

“That would make me very happy,” Peter murmured. “But I’m not certain how you would manage it. I don’t think your father would approve.”

“Leave him to me,” Loki declared confidently. “For now, you just rest. You need it.”

“Thank you, Loki,” Peter told him, cuddling close. Loki broke into a smile once Peter tucked up against him again, and he held the small, curled up boy to his chest, wrapping his long arms around Peter’s back and resting his chin against the top of Peter’s head.

“Just rest,” Loki whispered. “And... And you’re welcome.”

Peter smiled and allowed himself to fall asleep.

Thor was out in the stables when Loki found him. He was crouched next to his favorite hunting dog, petting the beagle playfully, though he stood when his brother entered.

“Hello brother!” Thor beamed, holding the beagle in his arms and laughing when the dog licked his face. His grin faded at the look on the omega’s face, though, and he frowned as he asked,

“What is it, Loki?”

“I have a favor to ask of you,” Loki murmured, giving the beagle a quick pat. “I don’t know if anyone has told you, but Peter had gone into heat.”

“Uh, yes, I’ve heard that rumor,” Thor coughed, clearly embarrassed. “That’s quite alright, I’ll steer clear of the third floor.”

“That’s not why I’m here,” Loki rolled his eyes. “I have a different favor. Peter seems rather sad, and I would like for him to have something to look forward to. I learned that he was taken from his family as a child when he was put in school, and he has not seen them since. He still loves them and wrote letters while in school. You know how difficult it can be to lose people who you love, so my hope is to go to London with him and allow him a short while to be reunited with them.”

“You wish to travel to London with your omega?” Thor frowned, setting the dog down when it got too squirmy. “But father would not permit that, I think.”

“That’s why I have a request for you,” Loki replied patiently. “Perhaps he would not mind so much if you were to tell him you were to accompany us. Of course once we arrive in London I see no reason why you cannot run around doing all those things father won’t let you do.”

“But would you and Peter be safe on your own?” Thor asked. “If I accompany you...”

“Don’t worry, brother, we can take care of ourselves,” Loki chuckled. “So long as you don’t get yourself into trouble with too much drink.”

“You know,” Thor clasped a hand on his brother’s shoulder, laughing softly. “I like the way you think. Perhaps I can even visit that one pub by the docks. The sailors are very entertaining. Great stories, great games, and great drink. You know I’ve been wanting to visit London again! Yes, we will tell father we are visiting Captain Rogers and he will have no complaints. I’ll send a message to the Captain immediately. He is a man of honor, but he owes me a few favors. Besides, perhaps I will stay at his home for the night. And you, where will you stay?”

“With Peter’s family,” Loki shrugged. “We won’t need long, a couple days should do it. It allows me to provide Peter with something to look forward to.”

“That is something we all need,” Thor nodded. “We shall inform father at once! When do we leave?”

“A little less than a week. Peter needs to...”

“Yes, of course,” Thor flushed again. “Well, come along then, we have a father to convince!”

“Indeed,” Loki nodded, a smile worming onto his face. “After all, we must drop by Captain Roger’s house to thank him for coming to our ball.”

“Indeed!” Thor nodded. “A splendid idea! This will be such fun.”

Loki smiled, opening the door for his brother and marching along after him, a grin on his face.

Predictably, Odin wasn’t thrilled by the idea of Loki and his omega tagging along with Thor on his journey to London. Questions arose as to why Loki needed to go (the answer was because it had been Loki’s ball) and then the question Loki had feared came up. Why not just leave Peter behind? Loki allowed a condescending attitude to take over him as he explained that they would require a servant to attend to them both on the journey and after they arrived. At first Odin pushed back

against this, urging Thor and Loki to leave now and allow Peter to finish his heat alone, yet Loki was more than relieved when Thor told his father just how much he enjoyed the omega's company. Again, predictably, Odin could not refuse his favorite son so he agreed to allowing Peter to join Thor and Loki on their travel. After all, Odin pointed out, he needed time to begin writing his will.

Once the conversation drew to a close, Thor was practically grinning ear to ear, and he shook his father's hand joyously.

"Thank you, we'll have such fun!" Thor declared. "I always enjoy my visits with Steve! He's so prim and proper, but he is always willing to engage in fencing with me. Keeps me on my toes!"

"Well I hope you enjoy yourself, my son," Odin finally broke into a smile. "I am glad you have a friend such as Captain Rogers. But do keep your brother and his omega away from that riff raff Captain Rogers keeps around."

"Of course father, Bucky is nearly always out of the house anyway," Thor explained, and Odin huffed in reply.

"I will never understand that alpha," Odin shook his head. "Such a good man with such poor taste... Anyway, send him my regards, yes? And Loki, keep that boy of yours in check. Who knows what he could get up to in a city such as London? I expect both of you to stay in the safety of Captain Roger's home, is that understood?"

"Yes, father," Loki replied respectfully. "Peter and I will not leave the house."

"Oh come now father, surely if Steve and I go out to dinner we can escort Loki and his omega?" Thor complained. "Surely they must not stay in the house at all times!"

"If they are escorted," Odin consented. "If you are going to a good establishment. Now, on your way. I have some finances to overlook."

"Thank you father," Thor beamed, clapping Loki in the shoulder. "I'll bring you back a souvenir."

"The only thing I require is your safe return," Odin murmured, his voice becoming kind. "Now, on your way."

Thor beamed and nodded, leading Loki out of the room with joyous laugh. Once they were well down the hall, Thor turned to his brother and gave him a friendly shake.

"You tell me the moment Peter is prepared and we shall depart," Thor told Loki. "I do look forward to this trip. But you're certain you and Peter will be alright staying on your own? I don't like lying to father..."

"We'll be fine," Loki promised him. "But can I trust you on your own? That is the true question. Remember that time with the fish market?"

"Do not remind me of the fish market!" Thor groaned, closing his eyes.

"Mother was at her wits end with you," Loki chuckled. "And I swear you smelled of the sea for a week after that."

"Alright, point taken," Thor sighed. "You just take care of yourselves, and you can always go to Steve if you require anything. I'll be at his house or at some pub near the shore I suspect. I suggest you go to Steve first."

“Believe me, I will,” Loki laughed. “Little help you’d be, drunk on a sailor’s liquor.”

“Now you watch yourself!” Thor laughed, shaking his finger at his brother. “I am always a help.”

“Oh yes, even in a drunk stupor you help so much by filling the room with the music of your snores,” Loki rolled his eyes. “Now, can I go tell Peter the good news?”

“Be my guest,” Thor nodded. “And Loki? Do either of you need anything? I can retrieve it for you.”

“We’ll be alright, thank you,” Loki smiled. “Now I think your dog probably misses you.”

“Indeed! I shall see you later!” Thor declared, marching away and leaving Loki to slip back into Peter’s room. The boy was awake now, and reading one of the books Thor had given him. He seemed more than happy to set it aside when Loki entered, and he searched Loki’s faces for answers as to how he conversation with Odin had gone. Loki offered him a half smile.

“We leave when you’re done with your heat,” Loki told him, grinning. “So hurry up.”

“Yes sir,” Peter laughed, saluting. “And they say that miracles don’t happen anymore.”

“They do when I’m around,” Loki slipped onto the bed beside Peter, stiffening only a bit when the boy cuddled up to him.

“Clearly,” Peter chuckled. “Now please be quiet and hold me, this whole thing is absolutely awful.”

“Yes sir,” Loki smirked playfully, not quite allowing himself to laugh at the look Peter gave him.

Chapter End Notes

So this chapter was a bit lighter and more fluffy, but the developments forming here could have big implications for our hero’s futures... What do you think of Thor and Loki after this? I know I haven’t dabbled much in their brotherly relationship but I might write about it a little more in later chapters, we’ll see
Again, I hope you enjoyed!
<3

Handmade Heaven

Chapter Notes

Well we've got another fairly fluffy chapter. Things seem to be going smoothly for the moment, but the infamous trip to London is coming up next chapter...
Hope you enjoy :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*I envy the birds high up in the trees
They live out their lives so purposefully
I envy the spiders, the squirrels and seeds
They all find their way automatically
But in this handmade heaven, I come alive
Bluebirds forever colour the sky
In this handmade heaven, we forget the time
'Cause birds of a feather fly together*

Peter had never been lazy. Sure, he'd found ways to wiggle out of some chores at his school, but that hadn't been laziness. That had just been to see if he could, and to give himself more time for tinkering and reading things he shouldn't. Now, though, Peter felt truly lazy, and it felt wonderful.

Loki was warm and though he was a bit bony, over the past week Peter had found more than enough ways to snuggle against him that were incredibly comfortable. Of course Loki had clearly been unhappy with some of them, so Peter did his best to steer clear of those, but Peter was determined to get the most out of this situation. If Loki was going to offer to stay, and if Loki was going to appear happy about helping, Peter was more than happy to use this to his full advantage. They'd feasted on everything from scones, to hot crossed buns, to rabbit that Thor had caught on a hunt.

Every day, Peter drank raspberry leaf, ginger root, and cinnamon bark tea, and yet every time one cup was gone, he found another to fill its place. The moment Loki offhandedly mentioned that Thor was willing to fetch things for them, Peter had begun using that to his full advantage, too. Loki seemed to find it endlessly entertaining that Peter had managed to get the alpha working at their beck and call, flushing and stuttering when he brought them their tea tray on Tuesday afternoon. Peter found Loki's chuckles endearing, but he also made sure to genuinely thank Thor, for Peter surmised that Odin likely hadn't the slightest idea that Thor was offering to help them.

Beyond that, it was incredible to Peter that a noble such as Thor Odinson would even offer to assist two omegas. Far more amazing was the respect he gave Peter, despite the omega being in heat. The alpha kept his voice kind and his eyes downcast and honestly it was somewhat unbelievable. Peter had never known a single alpha (besides his uncle) who hadn't pounced on an omega the moment they realized the omega was going into heat. Of course Peter's school had kept everyone safe and escorted omegas out quickly, but Peter had seen the same situation play out nearly every time alphas were visiting. Almost inevitably at least one omega would be going into heat, and Peter always flinched at the way the alphas would flock to them, surrounding them until a teacher broke it up. Odin's behavior was reasonable, normal; Thor's was not.

“You know,” Peter told Loki on Wednesday evening. “Your brother is an incredibly good person, really. I’ve never known an alpha like him.”

“I suppose,” Loki sighed, munching on a biscuit. “You’re not wrong, he’s incredibly good hearted. It’s sickening.”

“It’s refreshing,” Peter argued.

“It’s naivety,” Loki replied. “And one day he’ll be just like all the rest. His friends slowly sway him, day by day, to be more like them. Steve, Captain Rogers, he is a truly good man. My brother means well, I believe, but he doesn’t understand the half of the things that go on around him. One day father will give him an omega and then he will be just like all the rest. Father will make sure of it, then.”

“I don’t think so,” Peter murmured. “I think your brother may be naïve, but he is kind. He has a good heart.”

“Perhaps, for now,” Loki told Peter. “Perhaps.”

Loki had been uneasy about retrieving any sophisticated reading material for fear that his father would somehow discover it in Peter’s room, so that left a lot of time for the two omegas to talk. And so, really for the first time, the two did talk for long hours into the night until one or the other finally drifted off into sleep. They spoke about theater (Loki reluctantly admitted that he did in fact wish to be on the stage performing Shakespeare) and dancing (Peter far less reluctantly spoke about the awards he had won for being the best dancer in his school). They spoke about family, about London, and about expectations placed upon them. They spoke about meaning, poetry, and mechanics. Peter had even managed to make Loki interested in the little air cooling device Peter had managed to put together and hide in his room at school, taking it out only on the warmest nights of summer.

“Have you ever wondered,” Loki asked on Wednesday night, his thumb moving absently against Peter’s upper arm. “What you could bring to the world if you were an alpha? How your inventions might be able to change the world, the way Tony’s are?”

“All the time,” Peter admitted softly. “But who knows, maybe I can give my ideas to Tony and he can make them a reality.”

“But he would get all the credit,” Loki murmured. “Wouldn’t that make you upset?”

“At least the invention would be out in the world and helping people. That’s really what it’s about, changing the world, not gaining credit or glory,” Peter murmured. “I don’t need recognition to enjoy inventing and mechanics. All I want is for there to be discovery, and movement towards a better world. Even if I gain no credit, if I know internally that I helped toward a better world, then what more do I need?”

“You never wish that you could be more? Could be seen as more?” Loki murmured, glancing down at Peter’s hand splayed out against his stomach.

“People’s opinions of you isn’t what makes you great,” Peter replied softly. “Your actions, and knowing internally that they are right, and doing things for no credit, that is what makes you great.”

“That’s incredibly noble,” Loki murmured. “That’s incredibly... Good.”

“I don’t know,” Peter replied. “Whether it’s good or not. But I think it’s right. My uncle always

said that with great power comes great responsibility. I don't have great power, but I think even a little power gives great responsibility. And I take that responsibility very seriously."

"You know," Loki murmured. "I am unsure if I could ever be as you speak, but perhaps... Perhaps it is something I could strive toward."

"I think it is," Peter murmured, sighing and resting his head against Loki's shoulder. "I think you could be very great, if you chose to be, if you tried to be."

"Thank you," Loki murmured. "I am not sure that I have ever thought about these things as you have. But I have thought greatly about where I should belong, what I should do in this life. So many days, I feel..."

"Lost?" Peter suggested when Loki hesitated.

"Perhaps, yes," Loki nodded slowly.

"But you don't have to feel lost forever," Peter murmured. "I think you'll find your place if you keep looking."

"Perhaps," Loki's voice was soft as he gazed down at Peter, his thumb's movement against Peter's arm stilling. "Perhaps I will, but what if my place isn't... Isn't possible?"

"Everything is possible," Peter yawned, eyes growing heavy as he snuggled closer. "If you are determined."

"Perhaps," Loki replied, watching as Peter's breaths slowly evened out. "Perhaps not."

But despite how wonderful those days were, snuggled up against Loki with a teacup in one hand and a sweet in the other, inevitably Peter's heat came to an end. As always, Peter woke up first. He stretched, and yawned, and gazed silently at the omega sleeping beside him. In sleep, there was a softness to Loki that was lost when he woke up. The creases of his forehead were absent in sleep, and a small smile sat upon his lips instead of his usual sneer. His golden collar was a stark contrast to the milkiness of his skin. It was odd seeing it sitting there in plain sight, since Loki nearly always wore high collared shirts that hid the offending piece labeling him as an omega of the house of Odin. Peter let his fingers run along his own collar for a moment, sitting on the letters engraved upon it before his hand dropped away.

Loki's dark hair was scattered against his pillow, one lock falling into his face. Peter was tempted to tuck it into place since he knew how much Loki valued his impeccable appearance. Instead, though, Peter gently nudged the other omega and murmured a soft, "Good morning."

Loki hummed as he woke up, his eyes slow to flutter open. As always it seemed to take Loki a moment before he realized where he was, but once he did he relaxed against the headboard and smiled lazily at Peter.

"Morning," Loki murmured, folding his arms and giving Peter a careful once over. "How do you feel?"

"Like I'm ready for a trip to London," Peter smirked, and Loki broke out into a half grin.

"As am I," Loki chuckled. "But first you desperately need a bath."

"A bit hard, seeing as I don't have a tub," Peter shrugged, pulling his knees to his chest and wincing slightly when he noticed that the sheets were still a little damp. Loki wrinkled his nose but

didn't yet bother to stand.

"You can use mine," Peter was told. "I don't think a simple wash down is appropriate for after a heat. Just don't tell my father."

"Oh I won't. I'm sure he would be more than happy to give me a bowl and cloth and have me go at it, but my cut off for shows are people who are at least a quarter decent," Peter smirked.

"That high?" Loki smirked. There was a shared chuckle between them, yet it was interrupted when Loki cleared his throat and began to speak in a more serious tone. "Peter, before we go I have to ask, do you remember what happened during this heat?"

"Of course I do," Peter frowned. "Why would I forget?"

"You seem to still be in an awfully good mood," Loki murmured. "Considering the heat is over and... Well I'm assuming you realize now what you did?"

"You mean turning your brother into a servant? I do feel a little bad, but he did offer," Peter chuckled, yet Loki frowned and shook his head.

"Then you don't remember," he sighed. "It's best that way."

"Are you talking about the beginning of my heat? Are you talking about what your father almost did, or what I did. Are you talking about the kiss?"

Peter's voice ended just above a whisper, and Loki froze at his words. It was so clear when his gaze lifted and his eyes searched Peter's with the same sort of emotion Peter remembered from the night of the party. There was a desperation there, clouded over by a flimsy attempt at apathy.

"So you do remember?" Loki murmured.

"Of course I do," Peter nodded. "And I do not regret it."

"We can't," Loki insisted, breaking their gaze immediately. "You know why we can't."

"We were happy these last few days, weren't we?" Peter murmured. "You were happy, I could tell. I've never seen you smile, laugh, joke as you had these last few days. So why not? Why not if no one has to know?"

"Because it is wrong," Loki's eyes snapped back to Peter, yet this time they held anger. "We cannot. It's wrong. I was hoping you'd forget."

"I know you slept with an omega during your first heat," Peter spoke in a hushed whisper. For a moment, Loki paled three shades, and then his face turned red.

"Don't you ever speak of that!" Loki spat. "You can't. Don't you understand what father would do to me if that scandal reemerged? What would happen to you?"

"I will never tell anyone of it," Peter promised. "I only bring it up now because I want to know something: Is it me that you don't want, or do you just want to please your father? Please just tell me that much?"

"Peter, with total honesty I can say that these last few days have been my happiest for a long time," Loki admitted. He spoke softly, almost as if saying this in a whisper might keep the world from hearing, from knowing, that it was possible for the great Loki Odinson to ever feel happiness. "But

we cannot. It's wrong. I have made many mistakes, but I cannot make this one again. Father has granted me a pardon, and his actions aren't always good, but he is still the Lord of this Manor and I cannot fail him. I am not the son he wants, I am not Thor, but I will not fail him again. He has done much for me, despite everything. He took me in as a child when he did not have to. He fed me, clothed me, and gave me a life I did not deserve. I was a peasant, and he made me a noble. He granted me this life and I cannot throw it away. I must do him proud."

"Are those your words or his?" Peter pushed, yet Loki sighed and looked away.

"It does not matter," the older omega murmured. "Because either way they are true. Nevertheless, I want to take you to London to see your aunt. It's the least I can do for you. You've made me happy these last few days, and now I wish to return the favor."

"I said your brother was a good person," Peter spoke softly. "But I should have added that you, too, are good."

"Stop, please, don't," Loki sighed. "I bought you, remember, I own you. I'm not your savior. What's happened this heat does not change that. I have made mistakes. I have done things that were wrong. Laying with another omega, that is wrong even if it was a mistake."

"Your father tells you that you that you aren't a good person, that you're full of flaws, but there is more to you," Peter murmured. "Don't listen to only him. And besides, I can see that he treats you worse than your brother. Is it because you're adopted, or because you're an omega? Either way, does this supposed debt that you owe him really mean you can make no decisions for yourself?"

"He is my father, I must listen to him," Loki looked away. "One must always respect his father, especially when he has done so many things that he never had to do. He has provided all of this for me out of the goodness of his heart. I have abused his kindness in the past, but during your heat I was thinking very hard about my future, and how I was blessed with this life. I am Lord Odinson, I was given a charmed life where I never had to work in a factory as a child, and it was out of the goodness of my father's heart. Perhaps it's time I start appreciating that. But before I do, I wish for one more adventure, and I wish to spend it with you in London."

"And we will," Peter nodded, sighing softly. "But I hate to see you giving into the will of that man. It's not like you."

"And how would you know what I'm like? We hardly know each other," Loki pointed out.

"Are you certain?" Peter asked. They gazed at each other for a long moment, until Loki sighed, shook his head, and then chuckled softly, patting Peter's back.

"Come on," Loki told him. "Enough of this. You need to get clean and then we leave for London."

"Fine, perhaps we can talk about this more later. For now, I am more than ready for London," Peter grinned, allowing Loki to help him roll out of bed.

Peter decided that Loki and Thor had an odd sort of brotherhood. They shared teasing looks and inside jokes, and yet they simultaneously carried themselves in a way that made Peter wonder if they even remotely liked each other. Now, seated in the cab of the carriage beside Loki and across from Thor, Peter tried to distract himself from the awkward silence by staring out the window as the countryside rolled by.

"So," Thor suddenly spoke, the sound making Peter jump. "Your family. You are seeing them?"

What are they like?"

"Well," Peter hesitated, glancing quickly at Loki. "Mostly I want to see my aunt. She is truly the one that raised me. I have not seen her since I was a child."

"Then it is good that we are making this journey," Thor beamed. "Where in London are you from?"

"I'm, uh, I'm from the east," Peter bit his lip uneasily. "The south east of London."

"Indeed?" Thor smiled cheerily, evidently unconcerned or more likely unaware of the reputation of the East End. Loki, on the other hand, stiffened slightly. Peter swallowed hard and clasped his hands in his lap and tried his best to smile at Thor.

"Yes, actually originally we were from the south west of London, but... misfortune befell my family and so we had to move," Peter murmured. "Where is Captain Roger's located?"

"Rather near the palace," Thor smiled. "Has to be, since he has occasional meetings with Her Majesty."

"He does?" Peter's jaw dropped.

"Oh yes! I haven't the slightest idea what about. Military something-or-other I'm sure, but he keeps it all very confidential. Anyway, we should be arriving soon! Ah, there she is! London..."

"London..." Peter agreed softly, gazing out the window at the city looming ahead of them. He could swear that the sky appeared darker now, the smoke of the factories even thicker than it used to be, and yet he felt his heart warming at the sight. This was London, this was home.

They eventually arrived at a prim and proper townhouse, and Peter was surprised when Thor knocked at the door and moments later Captain Rogers himself answered it. He and Thor greeted each other with a firm handshake, and then Peter and Loki followed the men inside to a sitting room.

"Welcome," Steve told them. "I'm glad to be able to help all of you. I got your letter, Thor. If I receive any word from your father I will ensure that things are taken care of accordingly, and someone will retrieve Loki and Peter immediately. I have arranged for a cab to take you wherever you need to go, Peter. Just tell the cabbie the location."

"Thank you, Captain," Peter murmured, but then man chuckled and shook his head.

"There's no need to thank me, kid, just doing what's right," Steve smiled at him. "The cab should arrive in a few minutes. In the meantime, Thor, I had a few things I wanted to show you."

"Of course," Thor smiled, though first he turned to his brother and gave him a very unexpected hug. Loki froze in his arms, going stiff despite the smile Thor offered him when he declared, "Take care, brother. Promise me you'll be careful?"

"I will," Loki murmured, sounding nearly confused, and Thor smiled, patting his brother on his shoulder.

"I hope you and Peter both have a good time," he told them. "And I'll see you soon."

Loki stared after Thor, his eyebrows pulled together as Steve and Thor exited the room. Peter and Loki weren't alone for long, for a moment later the door frame was filled this time with Bucky.

“So it’s true,” Bucky murmured. “What Steve told me. You’re going to see Peter’s family?”

“Yes,” Loki nodded stiffly. “We don’t need your approval.”

“Be that as it may, I will still say that I am proud,” Bucky smiled, moving to sit near them. “I wish you both well. Peter, how have you been?”

“I’ve been well,” Peter admitted. “I’m eager to see my aunt.”

“Of course,” Bucky nodded. “As well you should be. Loki, may I speak with you alone for a moment?”

Loki appeared hesitant, but he nodded and allowed Bucky to lead him to the corner of the room.

“Thor wrote that you were staying with Peter during his ‘time of weakness,’ which I’m assuming was meant to indicate his heat?” Bucky scoffed softly, to which Loki nodded once, clearly uneasy. Bucky ignored Loki’s nerves and pushed on. “Thank you, that’s good of you to do. I meant it, I’m proud of you.”

“What do you want from me?” Loki demanded. “Ask and be done with it.”

“I don’t want anything,” Bucky frowned. “I just wanted to acknowledge your good deed. There are few noble omegas who would do as you did. I have to ask, though, and please do not be offended by my question: Did you stay because you are engaged with Peter romantically?”

“I am growing weary of people asking me that,” Loki spat. “No, I am not. I am engaged to Lord Stark, and unlike that alpha I am not flitting around with dozens of affairs, especially not with another omega.”

“You know that none of us would think lesser of you if you were,” Bucky murmured. “When you come to live with Tony you realize that such a lifestyle will not be unusual.”

“I care not for what your group of hooligans consider good manners,” Loki spat. “How many times do I have to speak to you before you’ll understand that I am not like you, nor your group. I don’t want help. I am Lord Odinson and I am perfectly happy with my life not being interfered with.”

“I understand,” Bucky sighed. “I apologize if I’ve offended you in any way. But know that help will always be offered to you if you need it.”

“You’ve made that more than clear,” Loki straightened his jacket. “Now Peter and I have somewhere to be.”

“Of course,” Bucky nodded, stepping back. “Best of luck.”

Loki nodded once, before motioning to Peter to come, leading the younger omega outside to their cab.

Peter could feel Loki stiffening beside him as the beautiful townhomes faded and were replaced with dilapidated dwellings, trash, and beggars. To Loki, Peter knew the streets must look an awful fright, but to Peter this was home. When the cab pulled to a stop outside of a red brick building now blackened with soot, Peter broke into a gigantic smile, and he tugged at Loki’s arm absently. The man’s apprehension was almost tangible, especially when a stooped man wandering by made a grab for Loki’s fancy waistcoat. Peter didn’t seem to notice or care, and he dashed up to the door, knocking excitedly.

For a long moment, no one answered, and Peter knocked again, biting his lip. Loki edged closer to him, casting a nervous look around the street, yet before Loki was able to get a word out, the door opened just a crack, and a pair of eyes peered out. They studied Peter for only a moment, before Loki jumped as the door was thrown open, and then Peter was being engulfed with a hug by a woman who somehow managed to look elegant even in rags.

“Peter, good Lord is that really you? Good Lord, Peter, my boy, my darling boy...” The woman held Peter close, grasping him to her chest as if he might turn into ashes and float away. “You’re here, Peter, you’re really here!”

“I am, I am May, I’m home,” Peter hiccuped, hugging her back, hiccuping softly as he pressed his face against her neck. “I’m home again. I told you I’d come back. I said I would. I promised, have I ever broken a promise?”

“Oh, my darling boy,” the woman murmured, pressing a kiss into his hair. “No, no you’ve never broken a promise.”

She pulled herself together faster than he did, and she finally held him at arm's length, gazing him up and down for a moment, before hugging him once more and then turning to Loki, and freezing.

“Who is this?” She demanded, evidently having been so caught up before she hadn’t even truly noticed the other omega. “You... You must be Lord Odinson. I got Peter’s letter. Come inside, quickly. Enough people have seen you here.”

Loki was more than happy to comply, though once he stepped inside the humble abode, he had to squint against the darkness. When his eyes finally did adjust, he cringed slightly and froze in the doorway, trying his best not to notice the clothes hanging to dry in the kitchen or the slightly moldy bread sitting on the table.

“What in the world are you doing here?” May was asking Peter, motioning for both he and Loki to join her at the small wooden table in the center of the room.

“Loki offered to bring me,” Peter bubbled with happiness. “He has helped me even more than the last time I wrote. He offered to bring me, and he even helped me during my heat.”

“My Lord,” May bowed her head at him. “I give you my most humble thanks for the kindness you have shown my nephew. He wrote to me in his last letter that you have treated him kindly, and I may only hope that I can somehow repay you.”

“That’s, uh, not necessary,” Loki cleared his throat, tearing his eyes away from his surroundings so that he could instead focus on the woman. “Peter’s service is payment enough.”

“I still thank you,” May murmured, and Loki’s brows drew together slightly at her voice. It wasn’t the Queen’s English, but it wasn’t the language of common folk either. Peter had mentioned that his family was from a different part of England before moving here. Did this woman have a different upbringing than the squalor that now surrounded her? Loki supposed it didn’t truly matter, but it was a curiosity.

“May, Loki and I are going to stay here for a couple of days, is that alright?” Peter asked her, speaking up when there was a lull in conversation. “Loki’s brother is in the city and can be called upon if there is any troubles.”

“Of course, of course you may stay as long as you like!” May nodded, though she flushed softly and quickly added, “However I do wish I had been given warning, Peter. I... I have hardly

prepared for guests. I apologize, M'lord, the house is a frightful mess..."

Now embarrassed, May stood and began to fuss with the clothes line, pulling down the mostly dry clothes and hurrying to place them in a basket in the corner. Loki hesitated, a bit honored by her treatment of him, yet still he declared, "It's alright, I understand. You, uh, don't need to, uh, to clean on my account."

"Of course I do, M'lord," May curtsied, leaving Loki half proud and half baffled.

"We can go out until you're done," Peter suddenly spoke up. "And retrieve some food for dinner!"

"Peter," May murmured, glancing quickly at Loki. "That won't be necessary. I can find food to put together for dinner. You... you must be cautious. The streets are no safer than they used to be and..."

May bit her lip, looking both Peter and Loki up and down and leaving Loki feeling a bit like a diamond necklace for sale in a storefront window. He cleared his throat, straightening his jacket and shifting uncomfortably. Peter also examined Loki, and then he broke into a smile and nodded.

"That's alright, we'll just find a change of clothes," Peter declared happily, wincing when May lightly hit him upside the head.

"Peter," she hissed. "What sort of a servant are you to this man? I apologize, M'Lord, my nephew has always been... rambunctious. I'm sure you have come to see that he can also be very good."

"No, perhaps he's right," Loki murmured. "Perhaps our clothes are not the most... inconspicuous. Besides, I have coins to buy us all dinner. It's no trouble."

Loki glanced quickly at the moldy bread on the table and then flashed a smile, ignoring the annoyance creeping into May's eyes. Still, she didn't say anything as Peter moved to dig through their bags sitting by the door. He didn't come up with anything particularly useful (all of their clothes were equally grand) yet May stepped forward with two pairs of trousers and work shirts.

"Here," she murmured. "Try these."

"Whose... whose are these?" Peter murmured, stepping forward with a frown on his face.

"I've taken up a second job as a wash woman," May explained. "I get fewer tips now at the pub... It'll be alright, no one is expecting this next wash for a few days time."

"Thank you," Peter broke into a smile, handing Loki's clothes to him and happily ignoring the way the omega's nose wrinkled. Peter led Loki to a door in the back of the house which led to small bedroom no bigger than Thor's closet, and Peter turned and shamelessly began to change. Loki supposed that things were quite different here, and that this was certainly less personal than helping someone through their heat, however as he turned to face the wall he was a bit more tentative in his movements. When Loki did turn back, he found Peter already dressed with his clothes in a pile and his corset tossed happily aside. Loki bit his lip, fingers ghosting over his own hidden under his shirt, and Peter laughed.

"You think anyone has one of those here?" Peter scoffed. "Also, I was wondering..."

His fingers lightly touched his collar, and Loki reached up to his own, the metal cold under his finger tips.

"I... I suppose you're right," Loki murmured, reaching under his shirt to undo his own corset. It

felt odd as he let it slide to the floor. It was freeing, frightening.

“Well then,” Peter turned around. “Can you undo mine?”

Loki nodded stiffly, stepping forward to undo the clasp at the back of the boy’s collar. He shook his hair back when it slipped off of him, and Peter broke into a beaming smile. Loki was more hesitant when Peter nodded for him to turn. Still, slowly, Loki did as he was told. It took a long moment for Peter to understand the clasp at the back, yet all of a sudden he did, and then the heavy weight of the gold was slipping down from around his neck.

“There, all gone!” Peter beamed, tossing the collars aside with the corsets, yet Loki could only stand, stare, and let his fingertips dance across his collarbone.

“All gone...” he murmured. “It’s... it’s off...”

“Of course it is,” Peter chuckled. “I just took it off. You alright?”

“I... yes,” Loki murmured, raising his eyes to meet Peter’s. “I... never better.”

Peter smirked, a chuckle in his eyes, and he shared a grin with the older omega. Then as quickly as the moment began, it ended, and Peter was gasping at Loki’s arm to pull him from the room.

“Come on,” he declared. “The world outside awaits!”

And so, after one more word of warning from May, Loki stepped into a world he’d never known.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks again to lokislonleyleady for editing this story! Next chapter you’ll all get to see what might happen in London... any guesses? Haha

Also what do you think of Thor? I might give him a little more screen time one of these days because I feel like he hasn’t done much of anything yet

Glass Balloon

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

*They say you used to be so kind
I never knew you had such a dirty mind...
And my heart just burst like a glass balloon
We let them fly too high and they shattered too soon
They'll be the wrong damn people in the wrong damn room
We broke our glass balloons
We let go of our glass balloons*

London was precisely as Peter remembered it, and it invigorated him. For the first time, Peter truly felt like he had the upper hand over Loki, and he couldn't help but laugh at the wrinkle of Loki's nose.

"This was your idea," Peter chuckled, gently elbowing the other omega in the ribs. "And I have to say thank you for it. Look, look around you, this is freedom. This is my home. This is nothing, and yet it's everything. I would do anything for this place, even if it's done nothing for me."

"You're very... enthusiastic about this," Loki flinched when there was a clang from somewhere. Peter's eyes widened, and then he yanked Loki to the side just before a waterfall of something that stank cascaded to land in the mud, and Peter broke out in another fit of giggles.

"You're welcome," Peter smirked at Loki's clear displeasure. "Come on, the market is this way."

"I've been to London many times, but never to this... area," Loki muttered softly. "Somehow I had not realized you'd be from the East End. Your accent is not telling."

"Well for one thing my aunt was raised in the west of London before her family fell ill and she had to find cheaper living. Anyway, my school also had a language teacher, of course. I can do a right proper Eastener accent if I need'ta," Peter switched his accent fluidly, grinning and pulling Loki along again. "You'd best keep your mouth shut, actually. You'll give us away in half a tick."

"This is really where you grew up?" Loki murmured, wincing when he stepped in something with a squelching noise, and he cringed as he stared down at his boot in displeasure. Peter rolled his eyes and nodded, chuckling again.

"You're one to talk," Peter replied. "I never knew people really lived in castles anymore. Anyway your castle is gaudy and ridiculous or summat, isn't that what you told me when I first arrived?"

"I suppose," Loki murmured. "I hadn't seen much else, really."

"And now you are," Peter chuckled. "You like it?"

"I--"

"That's a trick question," Peter interrupted him. "There's no right answer. Come on, and watch your feet. May will have our heads if we trek the street all around her floors. I'll probably be the one who ends up cleaning it and this is supposed to be my holiday so be more careful, will you?"

"Me be more careful? I wouldn't have to be if we weren't here," Loki muttered, though he winced

when Peter poked him in the ribs again, this time much harder.

“Your idea, remember?” Peter repeated. “Anyway, this is good for you. You want to whine to me about your home at the Manor, I’m happy to listen. But you get to see my home now, and I’m not even whining. Oi!”

Peter stumbled and would’ve fallen if Loki hadn’t caught him, but immediately Peter’s face fell, and he bit his lip, swallowing hard.

“Oh, I’m sorry! Here, let me help you,” Peter murmured, kneeling and helping a frail little boy sit up from where Peter had knocked him. He was haggard and had a little girl sitting next to him, shivering with a small metal cup clasped in her hand.

“Any change, sir?” She asked nervously. “Please? For me brother? He’s sick!”

“I... I’m sorry,” Peter swallowed hard, reaching in his pockets and coming up with nothing. He felt tears prickle his eyes, and he shook his head slowly when he spoke again. “I don’t have any, I’m so sorry..”

“Here, take this.”

Peter turned and stared in shock when Loki knelt, reaching in his pocket and pulling out several coins. He placed them in her cup inconspicuously and offered her a smile, murmuring, “I hope you find help for your brother. Come on, Peter.”

“Thank you, kind sir!” The little girl broke into a smile, speaking softly even as she threw her arms around Loki and hugged him. The omega was clearly startled, and he froze, gently hushing her and glancing around them nervously. When she let him go, though, there was slight smile on his face.

Peter knelt there for a moment more, staring at the scene in absolute shock, though when Loki stood he follow suit. He offered the children a kind smile, and then hurried to walk beside Loki, a half grin on his face. As he opened his mouth to speak, though, Loki cut him off.

“Not a word,” Loki declared. “I only wanted them to stop asking us.”

“They only asked once and you could have said no,” Peter pointed out. Loki sniffed and shrugged his shoulders, hands stuffed in his pockets. Peter smiled despite himself and murmured, “Thank you, that was kind.”

“Why should you thank me?” Loki frowned.

“I don’t know, it seems right,” Peter shrugged.

“Well all I did was hand over a few coins, it’s hardly a large gesture.”

“A few coins is more than many people have ever seen in their whole lives around here,” Peter replied. “Every coin counts, and most people don’t give any, no matter their wealth.”

Loki didn’t reply, but he did finger the remaining coins in his pocket. He seemed lost in thought, but still Peter prattled on about this and that. He was in the middle of talking about his old factory when he realized Loki wasn’t beside him, and Peter backtracked, frowning as he stopped beside the other omega.

“What?” Peter asked, following Loki’s gaze and then swallowing hard, reaching over to clasp his arm and shake his head. “Loki, come on, you don’t want to worry about that place. It’s no good for

you and I, we should move along.”

“What is that?” Loki looked like he’d seen a ghost, and Peter chuckled nervously, shrugging.

“Why do you care?” Peter asked. “It’s nothing, come on.”

“No, no wait I... That’s... that’s my family crest.”

“That’s... what?” Peter’s jaw must’ve hit the floor, and he looked between Loki and the facility several times, licking his suddenly dry lips and he murmured, “Must be a coincidence. That’s impossible.”

“No it is, I know it is,” Loki shook his head. “The colors, the raven, that’s it... what is that place? Peter I... Why does it display my family crest?”

“Loki, that’s impossible. That can’t be your family crest, it doesn’t make any sense. Listen to me Loki, stop, don’t go over there!”

“Why?” Loki frowned. “What is it?”

“Loki it’s... that place, it’s called The Raven, actually. May warned me about it since I was little. It’s a brothel and of course there’s plenty of those around but that one... I’ve heard omegas go missing for months and then show up there and never get out. I’ve heard it’s not like the others. I’ve heard that none of them are there just to work because they need money... I’ve heard they’re brought there.”

“Then what is it doing with my family crest?” Loki frowned deeply. “I... I might come to regret this, but I want to know.”

“Loki we shouldn’t,” Peter hissed softly, catching his arm when Loki began to approach it. “It doesn’t matter, please?”

Loki licked his lips, hesitating for a long moment, before he finally nodded slowly.

“Fine,” Loki murmured. “Fine, we won’t. But I wish I could know more. But fine, come on. Let’s go.”

Loki turned away and was about to follow Peter, when he let out a soft yelp, causing Peter to turn and pale, dashing back to his side and glaring at the alpha who was now towering over Loki.

“Hey, find someone else!” Peter declared gruffly, but the alpha simply grasped Loki’s arm in a bruising grip and shook his head.

“She wants t’see you,” the man muttered, tugging Loki towards The Raven. “Inside.”

“Get your hands off of me!” Loki spat, jumping to attention and tugging away, yet the alpha simply pulled Loki more harshly after him. Peter let out a soft cry, stumbling after the two of them and for a moment he tried to pry the man’s hands off of Loki’s bicep, but the man easily caught Peter’s arm in his other hand, frowning down at him.

“I expect she’ll want t’see the both of you, if yer together,” the man sighed, not seeming altogether pleased with this task. “Now come along quietly.”

Loki opened his mouth to state that no, he would not come along quietly, but moments later he was being pulled into a hallway so dark that he felt blinded for a moment. By the time his eyes had

adjusted, he and Peter were being shoved into a small but elaborate office and the door was being slammed behind them. Loki coughed indignantly, dusting himself off and opening his mouth to demand they be released immediately, yet the moment he opened his mouth his words died on his lips.

“Well, hello there,” the woman, an omega, sitting on the other side of the desk murmured, one half of her mouth quirking up in a half smirk. Her nails were immaculate, and her clothing was both expensive and revealing. Her dark hair hung loose, and Loki’s eyebrows pulled together because didn’t she look a bit... a bit familiar? She simply chuckled and spoke again. “What do we have here? A street rat, and an imposter.”

“I beg your pardon?” Loki spat, standing up straighter.

“I know who you are, Odinson, but what I don’t know is why you are here and dressed as if you are one of the common folk,” the woman chuckled softly, gesturing to the two chairs sitting opposite her. Peter hesitated, but slowly Loki sank into one so Peter sat in the other, frowning as he studied her.

“What makes you think I’m this Odinson?” Loki demanded.

“Well, for one thing your speech is not of the East End,” the woman chuckled again. “But for another, you are easily recognizable, Loki.”

“Have we met?” Loki demanded softly, his frown deepening.

“Not properly,” the woman smiled and shook her head. “My name is Hela, and I too am of Odin blood.”

“Excuse me?” Loki blinked, eyebrows pulling together steeply. “Of... Odin blood?”

“Indeed,” Hela allowed a smile to worm into her face. “Did you not see our family crest in the front?”

“I did but... I am confused as to who you are,” Loki murmured, studying her closely. “And if you know who I am then you know that I am not truly of Odin blood.”

“Oh, I know many things, Loki,” Hela replied, standing up and walking from around the desk. “Many things about your family, your mother, things you haven’t the slightest idea about.”

“You knew my mother?” Loki’s eyes widened. “My family?”

“Indeed,” Hela purred. “But first, I have not been properly introduced to this little morsel. What’s your name, darling?”

Peter swallowed and flinched away from her, eyes flying between her and Loki. He nervously licked his lips, before clearing his throat and declaring, “My name is Peter.”

“Peter,” the name rolled off of her tongue. “And what are you doing with Loki?”

“I’m... his servant,” Peter murmured, flinching again at the glare she gave him.

“Then why are you on the chair?” She demanded. “Have you not been trained? Really, Loki, I had much higher expectations of you. Does daddy dearest know how you spend time when you’re not at home?”

Loki hesitated, gulping as he looked between Peter and Hela, and then he nodded once, slowly.

“He has been trained,” Loki replied slowly, nodding at Peter, who felt an odd swell of anger welling up inside of himself. This wasn’t the Manor. This was London, his home, and both he and Loki were dressed as common folk, without collars or corsets, and yet even here he could not escape? For a moment he hesitated, yet when the other two omegas continued staring at him, Peter slowly sank to the ground, heart hammering as a smile twisted onto Hela’s face and she sat down in the chair he’d just left. One of her hands reached over to stroke his hair tenderly. It was not altogether unpleasant for a moment, but then her hand twisted in his hair, yanking it so abruptly that tears prickled in his eyes before she let him go. Loki’s face was unreadable, but he reached over and settled a hand on the back of Peter’s neck and then tapped his thumb three times. It was subtle, but Peter believed he understood it to be an apology.

“Now then,” Hela arranged herself to be comfortable. “What brings you to London, Loki.”

“First I should like to know to whom I am speaking,” Loki replied smoothly. “You claim to be of Odin, and yet I have never heard of you.”

“Of course not,” Hela chuckled. “The world seems to have all but forgotten me. I’ve heard they are calling Thor the eldest born. Awful, isn’t it, the way lies run rampant?”

“But... Thor is, I mean he’s the only child of Odin, of father,” Loki frowned, flinching when Hela let out a cackle of laughter.

“Oh please,” Hela shook her head. “Don’t tell me you believe it too? Does the household truly not even remember the past? Remember what once was? But of course not. So much easier to hide, to lie, to pretend. That is truly the only thing father was ever truly good at, but then I’m sure you know all about that, don’t you brother?”

“Brother?” Loki froze. “What do you speak of? Who are you? You seem to be the one who lies! Why have you brought us here?”

“Darling, I only wanted to finally meet my baby brother,” Hela melted, reaching to caress a hand down Loki’s cheek softly. “Ever since father tossed me to the streets I have yearned to truly meet you and Thor. I so much wanted to know you both, to help you grow and learn, to help you flourish. And yet I have been made to watch from afar, wishing only in my heart that I may one day finally meet you. I am Hela, Odin’s first born daughter, and I am so happy to finally truly meet you. You don’t know how long I have waited for this moment, how much I have yearned for the truth to be told so that you could truly understand and feel loved.”

“First born?” Loki blinked, staring at Hela in clear confusion. “Thor is the first born, the only born.”

“Oh my darling, I am so terribly sorry,” Hela murmured. “To have been lied to all of your life... There is much you must learn, so much that you do not understand. You are not to blame, of course. No, I can feel only empathy for you...”

Hela stood, moving to retrieve a book of photographs. She flipped it open, and Loki’s jaw dropped.

“That’s you...” Loki murmured. “And... and father?”

“Indeed,” Hela murmured. “Such a long time ago, yet I can remember it just like yesterday. It was springtime, just like now, and everything in the air was beautiful. I believed my life to be finally getting better. You see, my mother had passed on from a strange illness a few years before, and

father had remarried to a wonderful woman named Frigga. They now had a baby boy, my little brother Thor. He was such a darling baby, so sweet, so good, so trusting. He could smile, and he fell asleep when I sang him lullabies at night. Things were exactly as they should be, until I realized the truth behind the beautiful lies.

“You see, I remember when you came to the manor. It was a stormy day in mid April. The manor was locked tightly, yet someone came knocking at the door. It was a woman from the village. Not just any woman, but our servant girl. I allowed her to come in out of the rain, and I found that she had a little boy in her arms. It was her baby, her little Loki. You, my little brother. I feared that she would catch cold, so I took her by the fire and retrieved father. He came in and told me to leave them, but there was something in his eyes that I did not like. So, I did not leave, truly. Instead, I listened at the door, and I was horrified by what I heard.

“The woman’s husband had died in London. He had gotten in an accident, and the young woman was now a widow. Our father was unsympathetic, called your mother’s husband a fraud and stated that it was no less than he deserved. But then, the woman replied that it was Odin’s duty to help her feed her child, for it was not the child of her husband, but Odin’s baby.”

“What?” Loki paled, searching her face in confusion. “No... no that can’t be true... I was adopted. Father... father took me in!”

“You see, back then father made love to all the omega servants, but this time there had been a consequence. Your mother pleaded with Odin, said she would keep your true heritage a secret if he gave her the money to care for you, and reluctantly he agreed. He did not want to take you in, he did not want to assume the responsibility for the bastard child he had heralded. Yet I knew the truth, and so I took her aside and told your mother that I would stand by her through anything. I swore to be her friend, no matter the cost,” Hela went on, despite the frightened confusion growing on Loki’s face.

“All was well, until your mother began to fall ill,” Hela spat as she went on, her eyes angry. “It was sudden, and strange. There was no reason, no reason at all. Except I realized that her symptoms were precisely the same as my mother’s. She complained of odd aches in her stomach, her hair began to thin, and she grew so tired she could hardly lift her hand. She had headaches, and grew so easily confused. I began to nurse her from the servant’s quarters, watching as she grew more and more ill, just like my mother. I could not understand it. I thought perhaps I was cursed, cursed to have any who I cared for suffer this same awful fate. But, when she grew so ill she could hardly eat, she asked me to partake in the tea Odin dutifully brought her each day. I did so, as a kindness to her, and though it tasted perfectly delicious, I began to have strange feelings that night, and that is when I realized.”

“Arsenic,” Loki’s voice was a ghost of a whimper, his eyes shining with tears as he looked up at Hela, who nodded once.

“It was too late, when I realized,” Hela murmured as a tear dribbled down Loki’s cheek. “I demanded father to call a doctor, but he would not. He refused to fetch a doctor for our serving girl, for the girl he had brought you into this world with, your mother. I stayed with her until she took her last breath, and her dying wish to me was that you would be cared for. She loved you, Loki, so very much. You were her dearest treasure.”

“He... he killed my mother?” Loki whimpered. Hela clucked her tongue sympathetically, and she pulled him into a hug, another silent tear cascading down his cheek.

“I demanded that father take you in. I told him that I would tell the world what he had done if he did not. I shouted at him, I pleaded with him, and finally he agreed. He took you from my arms,

and he took you as his own. But in exchange, he banished me from the house. He gave me a small packet of money and told me that I was to never come back. I knew too much, and as long as you were safe I promised I would not speak it. But the years have only made the pain greater, and when I saw you on the streets I knew it was you. You look so much like your mother, Loki. I could no longer hold this secret that pains me so. Odin would have my head for telling you, but I can no longer heed the burden of truth alone.”

“He killed my mother?” Loki hiccuped, trembling in Hela’s arms, and she clucked her tongue, stroking his hair.

“I am so sorry for you to find out this way, but I could not hold this secret from you any longer. I came here and started a new life for myself. I had little money, so I did what I had to do. Eventually, I was able to found this place, and however awful it is, it has kept me alive long enough that I might see you once at least. But then perhaps Odin’s house was never for me anyway. I was expected to marry an alpha, but inside I knew I could not. Here I may live and love as I please, and I have heard that you might desire the same freedom.”

“I am engaged to an alpha,” Loki hiccuped.

“As was I, my darling. I did not love him, but I planned to marry him if only to please father. But once I learned of father’s perversity I could not find it within myself to do anything for him. It is better to accept yourself than to pretend to love someone in a lie,” Hela murmured. “I only wish father knew better than to lie so much.”

“He told me he adopted me, took me in out of kindness,” Loki’s voice sounded hollow.

“I know, my darling, I know,” Hela murmured. “I know how hard it is to realize that someone you love has never truly loved you in return.”

“And I... for so many years I kept myself from... He told me that honorable people do not have affairs with others and yet...”

“I know, I know,” Hela murmured, stroking his hair. “I wish I could change the past, could keep you safe from all of this. Truly, perhaps our father is not even a bad man, but a very lost one.”

“No, he killed my mother,” Loki pulled away, his gaze burning with fury. “He killed her. He has lied to me for all these years! He threw you out for trying to be good, to tell the truth! He has kept all of these lies and he... he murdered my mother, your mother! He... he is a liar, and a murderer!”

“Loki, you cannot blame him for all he has done,” Hela purred. “He is just an alpha.”

“He... he killed them,” Loki cried, pulling away, tears now streaming down his face. “All this time he has been lying to me, to Thor! He... he never did this out of kindness, he... he never even loved me! They... He...”

“Hush, you are loved,” Hela murmured. “You are loved by me. No matter what you do, or who you love, I will always care for you, my baby brother. It is wrong that Odin judges harshly and can only love his alpha son. You deserve the world Loki, and it is so wrong that father will only ever care for Thor, his true son.”

“But... I was not adopted! I... I am his son! All these years he said I was not his son!”

“I know,” Hela purred. “You are his son, a true Odinson. It is so wrong, what he has done to you. But you’re safe now, here with me. You are loved by me. Even if you are unloved and unappreciated by everyone else, even if father will never love you, I am proud to call you my

brother.”

Peter watched in shock as Loki utterly fell apart in her arms, his silent tears turning into hiccups as Hela murmured sweet nothings and stroked his hair gently. Finally he was silent again, and Hela pressed a kiss to his tear stained cheek.

“Are you alright, darling?” She murmured to him. “Little brother?”

“I... I have to...”

“I know, I know darling,” Hela murmured. “I’m sure you have someplace to be. Go, go with your omega and continue on with your life, but know that I am always here and that I will be here if you ever need help. I am your sister, and though I cannot go home to Odin, know that my door is always open to you, and to Peter should he ever need somewhere to come and stay for awhile.”

“I... thank you,” Loki murmured, seemingly too distracted or disheartened to notice the more sinister meaning behind her words.

“Now,” she stood and motioned for Loki to do so as well. Belatedly, Peter also stood and hurried silently along behind the other two omegas. “Go, but go knowing that I love you dearly Loki and hope to see you again soon. I do not want Odin to hurt you, so you must not mention this visit with me. He can be unpredictable, and I cannot let him hurt you because you have spoken with me, alright? This must be a secret, no matter what you do when you get home. Say to him what you like, for I know you will likely have questions for him, but do not mention my name, for your own safety. Do you understand, darling?”

“Yes... yes I understand,” Loki murmured slowly, and Hela cupped his face gently.

“Your mother would be so proud of the omega you have grown up to be,” Hela murmured. “And I am proud.”

“You’ll be here?” Loki murmured as they approached the front door. “So I can visit?”

“Always, darling,” Hela purred. “I will always be here for you.”

Loki nodded, almost turning away, but she caught his arm and leaned close, murmuring into his ear, “And remember, father may be lost, and he might have done very bad things in his life, but he will not live forever. One day you’ll be free from his lies, free to be whoever you want to be. He has lied to all of us, Loki, has turned me to the streets and may threaten to do so to you one day. But I love you and I will always love you as my little brother. And your mother loved you, you were her greatest treasure. You must never forget her, as she loved you until the moment Odin sucked the last bit of life from her lungs.”

Loki was trembling slightly as Hela pressed a kiss to his cheek, and then her door was closing, leaving Loki and Peter in the alley behind The Raven. Peter shivered as he realized it was nearing sunset, and he paled, shivering against the nearing nightfall. Loki appeared to still be in a state of shock, so Peter didn’t try too hard to speak with him yet. Instead, he led Loki over to the market and as far away from The Raven as possible, an odd uneasy feeling creeping up the back of his neck.

“Loki,” Peter murmured after the man had handed over the money for dinner and they were on their way home. “Are you okay? Do you believe her?”

“She had photographs,” Loki’s voice was numb. “I know how lies sound, maybe better than anyone. She was not lying. He... he killed my mother.”

“Loki, listen to me,” Peter suddenly pulled him to a stop, searching the other omega’s hollow face. “I don’t know if she was lying or not, but her... facility, that place she owns, it’s famous for being dangerous. Like I said, omegas go in and never come out! She.... kidnaps them or something! Forces them to sell themselves to alphas!”

“No!” Loki pulled out of Peter’s grip, anger suddenly flashing across his face. “That cannot be true. That is just a rumor made up to put shame on the name of someone who is already weak, someone who cannot defend herself! Have you seen proof of this yourself?”

“I mean... no but-“

“Then that is the lie,” Loki spat, his eyes flashing. “You... you peasants will come up with anything to put shame on a noble who has fallen.”

“Excuse me, what did you just say to me?” Peter’s jaw dropped, his face turning red. “No, okay you know what? No! I know that you’ve had a big shock, obviously, but you can’t just say that to someone. No! Listen, I’m trying to help you, Loki.”

“She helped me, she told me the truth!”

“And so am I,” Peter growled. “But you only want to listen to her, a person you met for the first time today with stories that could be false rather than the omega you’ve at least known for some time and have spent heats with.”

“I... I’m sorry,” Loki deflated, tears bubbling up in his eyes again and threatening to cascade over his cheeks. “I’m sorry I didn’t mean that. I just... he killed my mother... He killed her, he’s lied and he... he has never loved me...”

“Loki, listen to me,” Peter murmured, reaching to wipe at his tears. “I know you didn’t mean that, and you’ve been through... through a lot today. And I’m so, so sorry. We have to get home, May is probably worried sick. But... But Hela isn’t the only one who loves you. That was not true. I believe your brother Thor cares for you, and Lady Odin, your... your mother loves you, I can see that. And Loki, no matter what you think of your mother and of Thor, I... I love you. You are not unloved.”

“You know not what you’re saying,” Loki turned away, swallowing hard and trying to hide the tears on his cheeks. “Thor will only ever see me as the omega in his shadow, and perhaps Frigga loves me but she is... is not my mother. And you... You know not what you’re saying. How could you love someone like me? A bastard son whose father will not even acknowledge is of his blood.”

“I don’t care if you are an Odinson, I wouldn’t care if you were a peasant. You need to stop looking at the value of titles and nobility and start looking at the value of individual people,” Peter replied standing up straighter. “You have it within you to care for people, to be kind. I have seen it. And yet you bury the kindness within yourself so deep that even you can no longer acknowledge it. You don’t have to play the role that everyone expects of you, at least not here. You don’t have to be Lord Odinson to be loved and appreciated. All you have to do is be Loki, to be yourself, and that is more than enough. I couldn’t care less about your title, what I care about is the person I see you hiding, the person you could be if you stepped out of your father’s expectations.”

“And if I did, if I stepped out of his expectations, where would I be then? On the streets?”

“Like your sister?” Peter went on. “If she is telling the truth, is that really the man you want to emulate?”

“And what then? If I ever truly acknowledged the things I keep bottled up, what then? Would you not leave me for Lord Stark? Leave me on the streets the way father wanted to. What of your aunt? Of the money you must get for her?”

“Not just me, but the both of us. Tony would take us in, I’m almost sure of it. We could both be free with him, free together.”

For a moment, Loki seemed to consider it, but then he shook his head and turned away, his voice soft as he murmured, “I cannot. I am an Odinson, I can’t just...”

“And if she is telling the truth? What if he did kill your mother,” Peter whispered. There was a very long moment of silence, yet when Loki turned, his eyes were still shining with tears, and when Peter pulled him into a hug, Loki didn’t pull away.

“Come on,” Peter murmured. “We have to get home.”

“Wait, Peter,” Loki stopped him again, swallowing hard. “Perhaps.... perhaps you’re right. I... Do you really mean what you say?”

“I am not a liar,” Peter gazed up at him, their eyes locked for a long moment. Loki’s eyes still shone with tears, and he looked so lost, yet when he began to lean closer to Peter, the boy placed a hand on his chest and shook his head. “Not here, someone could see us. Come, let’s go home, and we can discuss this later, alright?”

Loki nodded slowly, swallowing a lump in his throat. As they walked, he let his hand brush against Peter’s, and Peter’s fingers laced through Loki’s. After a moment, Peter squeezed Loki’s hand warmly, his thumb dancing back and forth across his knuckles.

Chapter End Notes

Well, this is a new development! Is Hela telling the truth? Is she lying? Is it half and half? Who’s to know! What do you think? And what do you think the boys will do now they they have this information....

Thanks again to lokislonleyleady so sticking with me on this and always giving ideas and tips when I need them :)

Scab and Plaster

Chapter Notes

So believe it or not, the lyrics I've posted at the beginning and end of this chapter are from the song that inspired this entire fic. When I heard Scab and Plaster by Marina it immediately reminded me of Loki, and I felt sure I could write a Loki fanfic surrounding the lyrics of this song. And now, finally, we've arrived at the chapter which inspired it all... hope you enjoy! This chapter has a ton in it, and some of the best little tidbits are from advice Lokislonleyleady gave so thanks again for that :-)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*I stepped into a room of clocks that all told different times
I stepped into a mirrored world that mirrored all our crimes*

*You keep picking at the scab and I keep selling the plaster, You keep telling my that I'm bad but I
keep on getting better faster...*

*You hold me down and you hold me up, you can't communicate. You brought me up just to bring
me down, I've nothing left to say*

Unsurprisingly, May gave Peter a long and unfortunate lecture on the fact he'd come home after dark which resulted in Peter flushing and Loki smirking despite himself. Peter glared at him as May worked to fix dinner, so Loki apologized through one of his chuckles.

"I'm sorry," Loki told him. "It's just, she reminds me of my own mother."

Peter rolled his eyes, but he didn't argue because honestly it was just nice to see a smile on Loki's face, even if it was at his own misfortune with his aunt. Dinner was delicious, Loki had to admit it despite himself. Peter was a little angry when May gave up her bed so Loki could have it, but Peter was impressed when Loki helped May set up a comfortable sleeping situation in the main room of the house, covered up by the thickest, softest jacket Loki had packed.

That night, as Peter tried to drift off to sleep, Loki cleared his throat and woke him up again.

"Do you think what she said was true?" Loki asked him.

"I can't say," Peter murmured, gazing up in the general direction of the bed from where he was sleeping on the floor. (May's bed was simply too small to hold both of them. They knew, because they'd tried.) Loki sighed at his response, his voice quiet when he spoke again.

"It all makes sense," he murmured. "It all makes so much sense. He has never loved me. Father never cared for me the way he cared for Thor. Sometimes it feels like I'll never be free."

"Sorry, but I'm tired. Goodnight Loki," Peter mumbled. This was true, but he also couldn't stand to have Loki curled up in his aunt's bed, complaining about his supposed lack of freedom. Peter grunted as he tried to get comfortable and added, "I'll see you in the morning."

Loki didn't verbally reply, so Peter rolled over and fell asleep.

In the morning, Peter startled when he realized that he was alone. He scrambled up and pulled on his shirt, hurrying out to the main room and blinking in confusion at what he saw.

"Hello," Loki glanced up for only a moment. "Good morning. Your aunt left you breakfast on the table. She's already left for work."

"What're you doing?" Peter asked slowly, completely ignoring the bread and meat in favor of joining Loki by the hearth. He sat in front of a strange sort of pot that sat in flames which Loki was observing carefully. "Are you... cooking?"

"Not exactly," Loki murmured, poking the wood once more before he seemed to deem it ready. Peter watched curiously as Loki leaned to the side, and then Peter cringed when he saw that Loki was holding his collar. Peter sighed, preparing to bear his neck and get it put on, but instead Loki asked, "Do you know how an omega gains their freedom?"

"I... I am unsure," Peter spoke slowly. "Considering my school trained us to be married omegas not... servants."

"You mean slaves?" Loki peered at him.

"Ah, so you're familiar with that term. I'm impressed, honestly," Peter spoke dryly.

"Their collar is destroyed." Loki suddenly spoke. "If an omega is given freedom then their collar is destroyed. The collar is what claims the omega. The collar is what makes an omega belong to a family instead of to him or herself. Without a collar, an omega is free. It's honestly a ridiculous law that I hope is one day amended. Freedom should not be as simple as placing a collar around another's neck. Of course I have paperwork for you as well, but I shall burn that too when I arrive home."

"Oh?" Peter asked slowly.

"Yes," Loki replied. He hesitated for a long moment, licking his lips, and then in one fluid moment he tossed Peter's collar into the pot, and Peter's jaw dropped.

"What... what you doing?" Peter cried, eyes flying between the pot and Loki. He hesitated for a moment, before he grabbed for the fire poker and would have fished it out if Loki hadn't stopped him.

"What are you doing?" Loki questioned. "Isn't this what you want? Your freedom?"

"I... I do but... I thought maybe I could send home money to my aunt, something! I... she can't support me, I can't stay here. Don't you see, we can't afford my freedom," Peter's eyes were desperate, yet Loki simply chuckled.

"Are you certain?" He murmured. "Because I believe you and your aunt just acquired a pot of gold."

Peter looked between him, and the pot, and then him again, and then Peter's jaw truly did hit the floor.

"You mean..." Peter swallowed. "You mean I... You mean that collar really was gold? And... and you're giving it to my aunt?"

“To her, and to you,” Loki murmured. “I’m certain she can live off of gold around here for a good while, don’t you think? And... And I suspect that she would be able to support you, should you decide to stay with her and get a proper job now you’re old enough. Not everyone gets freedom, Peter, but you’re free. There is no life for you at Odin Manor; there is no life but the one my mother faced. I cannot protect you from my father forever. You’ve showed something to me since I met you that I have not seen in anyone, at least not directed toward me. They can say about me what they like, but I can no longer keep you as a slave. I cannot. I desired an omega to prove my worth yet somehow I believe I’ve done nothing but lower my own worth.”

Peter stared at Loki for a long moment, trying to digest what had just happened. He stood, peering into the pot where his collar still sat, not yet melting but perhaps looking a little softer.

“If it doesn’t melt well enough I’ll take it to a blacksmith,” Loki spoke up. “Don’t worry.”

Peter peered at it for a moment more, before he turned his attention back to Loki and broke into a smile. Without thinking too hard, Peter let his heart take over and he knelt so that his eyes could meet Loki’s. They gazed at each other for a moment, before Peter wrapped the other omega in a hug. At first, Loki was tense, but as Peter continued hugging him, the older omega slowly relaxed. Yet his muscles simply tensed again when Peter tipped his head to the side, and then he caught Loki’s lips in a kiss. Peter has kissed alphas before. At school he’d often snuck away with visiting alphas to kiss them and try to convince them to take him home. Those kisses had always felt important, but dry to Peter. They’d always given him a sort of indigestion when they were done. He thought perhaps he simply didn’t like kissing, that perhaps no one truly did and everyone was lying about how good it could be. And yet now, for the first time in his life, this kiss didn’t feel wrong. It lasted all of five seconds (and those were the best five seconds of Peter’s life) before Loki was pushing him back, studying him closely with eyebrows pulled together.

“Peter, you don’t have to do that,” Loki murmured. “You don’t have to, you’re free now. And you’re not even in heat.”

“Exactly,” Peter’s voice ghosted over Loki’s lips. The dark haired omega’s eyebrows pulled together, and for a long moment he simply studied him. He analyzed Peter like one of his Shakespeare plays, studying and learning every line on his face, before realization seemed to dawn, and Loki was left swallowing hard. Peter chuckled, pushing Loki’s hair back and murmuring, “May I? Is it alright with you? I know you love Tony, so I understand if this isn’t alright. I’ll stop if you ask me to.”

“You know what?” A smirk slowly pulled onto Loki’s face. “Yes, it is alright. Please, don’t stop.”

And that was all that it took. Peter was on him in moments, knees on either side of Loki’s hips. Peter pinned him to the chair and moaned softly into the kiss. At first the kiss was on his lips, but then it worked down to his chin, then his neck, and then down to Loki’s clavicle which was blessedly uncovered now by anything except kisses and love bites. And this, Peter realized as Loki moaned softly and fell apart under Peter’s ministrations, his chest raising and falling, his head tipped back, a whimpering moan on his lips, this was freedom.

And so they spent their day tangled together, squeezed into a bed that didn’t truly fit them both. When the afternoon rolled around, they were a tangle of limbs and both desperately in need of bathing, but neither omega wished to be the first to stand from where they’d made a blanket fort on the floor.

“I’m sorry, truly, but I have to ask. Was this your first time?” Loki murmured against Peter’s hair, pressing a kiss there.

“It had t’be,” Peter mumbled, lazily stretching and then getting more comfortable in Loki’s arms. “I’ve kissed plenty of alphas but we had to save this for the alpha we were wed to.”

“I hope it was worth saving it for me,” Loki murmured.

“Oh, it certainly was,” Peter chuckled. “Like I said, I’ve kissed many alphas, but it was never like this. All of those kisses felt hollow, like lies.”

“I’m sorry,” Loki pressed another kiss into his hair. “That they made you do that.”

“No one made me,” Peter frowned. “Somehow I thought it would benefit me, that one would eventually choose me. I suppose maybe I was as uninteresting to them as they were to me.”

“I don’t think that could be true,” Loki chuckled. “You’re very interesting.”

“And what about you?” Peter asked. “You said you had with Fandral, and another omega. Anyone else?”

“Certainly, there have been many,” Loki sighed. “And quite honestly I suspect that father knew about the noble alphas that came to my chambers during parties. He never said anything, though, because noble alphas may do as they like and I was nothing more than a part of their game. But I didn’t mind. It was hard to think about anything else when they had me. It was only after they left me there that I would begin to feel again, and then I would retrieve another to push the world away for a little while.”

“But he couldn’t stand the noble omega?” Peter asked softly.

“Omegas aren’t to have such games,” Loki sighed. “Alphas are not wrong for doing such things out of wedlock, don’t you know. But with two omegas who can you blame? Only the omegas themselves. My father always has such high expectations for me, expects me to do so well for the family, but he’s also eager to place blame on me when things turn sour.”

“He would place blame now, wouldn’t he?” Peter murmured, but Loki simply pressed another kiss to his temple.

“I don’t care,” Loki spat. “I have bedded nearly every noble alpha in the county, practically in England, but never was it like this. All of those times it was nothing more than carrying out an action to numb my mind. This, this is what they truly mean when they say to make love. I feel as though I lost a shred of my innocence that I somehow held onto until this day. And nothing father says to me will take this feeling away. I don’t care what he says. This is what it’s supposed to be like, I’m certain.”

“Lord Stark,” Peter murmured. “Have you and Lord Stark ever...”

“No,” Loki whispered, burying his nose in Peter’s curls. “We have not. He refuses to accept that I love alphas.”

“Is he wrong?” Peter asked.

“Perhaps. Because, you see, I don’t love alphas, but I do...”

“Love him,” Peter finished when Loki hesitated.

“Yes,” Loki’s voice was only a whisper. “I do.”

“He’s a good alpha, isn’t he?” Peter murmured. “He respects us, respects omegas. But it’s odd because even so he still uses omegas for his own means.”

“He doesn’t exactly respect omegas,” Loki explained. “He just doesn’t disregard them as less than human. There is a difference. In his mind we should all have equal freedoms, equal opportunities, and no one should be judged harshly for something that another may get away with. Yet despite that, I’m not certain he truly respects any of his lovers. Or perhaps he does, but he cycles through them so quickly it is hard to tell.”

“He has been engaged to you for some time, yes?”

“Yes, but are we even truly engaged?” Loki murmured. “He does not spare me the time of day, truly.”

“No, I don’t think that’s true. He tries, I think, but you do not reciprocate it.”

“I can’t,” Loki whispered. “If I allow myself to truly love him as I want to, I will finally break when he goes back to his many affairs. I cannot allow myself to begin to truly love him, because I will break. And I can’t. I just can’t, Peter. I just can’t.”

Peter bit his lip, pulling back to find tears silently trailing down Loki’s cheek, and Peter sighed and wiped them away gently. He then kissed Loki’s cheek, soft and tender, and then held Loki close, humming and rocking him.

“I won’t leave you for an affair,” Peter whispered.

“That’s not truly the problem,” Loki whispered. “I am not against someone having more than one lover. What I cannot tolerate is the casual disregard for the feelings of someone still warm in his bed as he moves to the next room and never returns. He leaves them waiting, waiting forever for even the smallest drop of love, or caring, but eventually you realize that you are nothing more than a pawn, a decoration, pretty, pliable, but matterless.”

“I’m sorry,” Peter whispered. “But you matter to me. I hope I never make you feel that way.”

“No,” Loki murmured. “For the first time after sex, I don’t feel that way. For the first time I think I have more pieces of myself in place rather than less. I’ve realized that being Lord Odinson isn’t what makes me matter. To you, it seems, I can exist outside of my title and still somehow manage to mean something.”

“You mean everything, Loki,” Peter murmured, and he hummed when Loki pressed their lips together.

And so, during those three days in London, Peter felt as if he gained back every ounce of his freedom. With each kiss, each touch, each moment spent entangled in a bed that didn’t truly fit two people, Peter felt like he’d gained back a fiber of his being that he’d hardly known was missing. Peter spent time talking with May from the moment she got home from work until the moment neither one could hold their eyes open. Peter washed dishes beside Loki, and taught the omega how to properly roast a bit of meat May had managed to bring home. With every new step, Peter could sense Loki’s hesitation. And yet, time and again, the elder omega would study Peter with careful eyes, gleaming with analyzation, and then push forward, following Peter’s lead. Peter could see it in the way Loki’s tongue darted out to lick at his upper lip, he could see it in the small creases around his eyes when he narrowed them just slightly; Loki was learning from Peter and he was allowing Peter to guide this paradigm shift.

Of course May had been shocked and slightly horrified when Loki came home on day two with box of gold coins and the declaration of Peter's freedom. For a long time, May hadn't quite seemed to be able to react at all, but when she finally snapped out of her shock she thanked Loki profusely, tears in her eyes as she drew Peter into a hug. That night May and Peter spoke until long after Loki had gone to bed. They discussed the past, the future, and everything in between. Peter realized that not only was he free, but he was happy.

When the last day finally rolled around, Loki gave Peter and May their privacy, putting around the bedroom as May pulled Peter into her arms in the kitchen. Loki had grown somewhat sad on that last day, not speaking much to either May or Peter, and when the carriage rolled up outside, Loki shifted his weight back and forth, seemingly unable to meet Peter's eyes.

Loki opened and closed his mouth several times, eyes flickering to May and then back down to the ground. Finally he cleared his throat, took a deep breath, and then murmured, "Goodbye, Mr Parker. I don't expect you to write, but if you do choose to then I recommend you send the letters to Stark Manor instead of Odin Manor. Here is the address."

"Loki," Peter murmured, stepping forward and ignoring the paper in the omega's hand. Loki still refused to meet his eyes, so Peter dared to let his fingers brush Loki's arm, and the elder omega looked up immediately, tense. May knew plenty, but she did not know what he and Peter had done while she was at work. Peter let his fingers drop, and he smiled as he murmured, "I spoke with my aunt at length and... Well I know I am free, and it's incredible, and I might return here at any time, but I am concerned what your father will say if you return without me."

"Peter, I don't give a damn what my father says. Please pardon my language," Loki glanced quickly at May. "He can say and do as he likes, and so will I."

"Loki," Peter murmured. "I understand if you don't want me to, but I still thought I'd ask... Loki, I'm offering to go back with you."

"What?" Loki glanced between Peter and May, confusion falling onto his face, his voice just above a whisper. "But why?"

"I have made my life for myself here," May spoke up. "I love my nephew with all of my heart, and I would be happy for him to be with me. But I also realize that this is no place for an omega Peter's age."

"Neither is the Manor," Loki pointed out.

"But I believe Peter would be happiest with you," May murmured. "If you'll allow him to accompany you."

"Is that true?" Loki whispered, gazing at Peter. "Surely not. Surely you would not choose a life with someone like me over... Over freedom."

"But I am free with you, aren't I?" Peter raised his eyebrows. "I do not mind working as a servant who may leave at my own liberty should I desire to. You told me to choose a job, a proper job, and I am. I will not come with you if I am to be a slave, but I would be more than happy to be your paid servant, the way Shuri is paid and may come and go when not working."

"You would choose that life?" Loki whispered. "You would choose that life for me? You would... You would choose to stay with me rather than stay here with your aunt? You don't..."

"I do not hate you, Loki," Peter interrupted. "You granted me freedom. I don't owe you a debt, so

don't think that I do. If I come, this is a job and I may leave whenever I wish. I reserve the right to quit whenever I wish. But I want this job, I want to remain by your side."

Loki looked between Peter, and Aunt May, clearly baffled and a bit frightened by the realization that anyone would choose to stay with him rather than abandon him at the soonest possibility. The room was silent for a long moment, everyone holding their breaths, but then Loki's chest swelled.

"Peter, I cannot promise you a stable job. I... I have a plan to go home and confront my father about the lies which I have been told. I know not what he will do to me."

"Then it sounds like you need a friend to support you," Peter murmured.

"And you would support me even then? Even if I did something so foolish as confront Lord Odin? My... my father?" Loki asked.

"If you continue to treat others with the respect I have seen growing within you, then I will support you always," Peter replied. Loki swallowed, biting his lips together, and then finally he nodded.

"Yes," he murmured. "Please. Please come."

Peter broke into a smile, turning and pulling May into a hug. She clasped him tight to her, burrowing her nose in his curls as she murmured, "Be safe, Peter. I have always wished for you to be happy. I will be here when you return home again. I love you."

"I love you too," Peter whispered. "I'll write, I promise. I love you so much."

Loki left them to say their goodbyes, stealing away into the carriage. Before very long, Peter emerged, climbing in beside Loki.

"You're sure?" Loki asked softly.

"I'm positive," Peter replied. That made Loki relax, though he slipped a cloak around Peter's shoulder that hid his neck and missing collar.

I've lost, I've lost my innocence I've found my self-belief...

You tell me what to say and wear

You say that it's because you care

But I prefer to be alone

Than live a life that's not my own

When they picked Thor up at Captain Roger's home, he chatted happily about the good times he had drinking with the sailors. He shared with them the tales he was told of adventures at sea, his eyes lighting up with excitement.

"There are no rules at sea!" Thor declared excitedly, looking between the two omegas. "There are no titles. There is the captain of course, but all the sailors must work as one team to stay alive on those choppy waters. There is adventure, and you never know what will happen the next moment! There is exploitation, and heroics, and the whole crew must fight each day, moving as one, moving together in a well oiled, equal, fighting team! It is a rough life, but some omegas also become sailors and out on the ocean there is no difference between alphas and omegas. They must all work together to survive! No one higher than another, all fighting to keep their vessel afloat and on

course to an uncharted land!”

“So you want to be a sailor?” Peter asked slowly.

“Me? Of course not!” Thor gave a fully bellied laugh. “I must inherit father’s manor and take charge of the surrounding lands! I will do him proud, and I can’t very well do that from a ship at sea, now can I?”

“I suppose not,” Peter murmured.

“Of course not!” Thor laughed again, though he grew quiet a moment later and gazed out the window, leaving the carriage in a heavy silence.

When they arrived home, Thor carried Peter’s and Loki’s bags inside, leaving the two omegas on the front steps.

“When will you speak with your father?” Peter murmured.

“I don’t know,” Loki replied softly, gazing at the manor for a long moment, sighing deeply. “Perhaps I was wrong. Perhaps I should not do this after all. I will tell him that you’re now a servant, of course, but perhaps...”

“Loki,” Peter murmured. “I will support whatever your decision. But come on, we should go inside.”

“You go on,” Loki nodded. “I’ll be along.”

Peter studied him for a moment, before he nodded and then hurried up the steps, slipping inside. Loki looked around at the beautiful manor, the place where he’d grown up. He’d always taken this luxury for granted. He’d thought himself incredibly wise, but now he wondered if his time in London had made him foolish. He did not regret the freedom he’d given Peter, but what if the wisest choice was now to feign ignorance? Perhaps he should not face his father. After all, even if his father had never loved him, at least he did things for Loki’s best interest. Didn’t he? But Odin had killed Loki’s mother! He was a murderer! But then was it truly wise to declare knowledge of this?

These thoughts were racing through Loki’s head as he wandered up the steps and slipped into the house, but then he froze, and he went cold. There stood Odin, halfway up the stairs, Peter’s arm in his grip, the cloak pooled on the ground at Peter’s feet, his bare neck on full display.

“Loki,” Odin demanded, his teeth bared. “What is the meaning of this?”

“Father,” Loki’s mouth went dry. “I-“

“I already told you, M’Lord. I will be working as a-“ Peter broke off in a soft whimper as Odin shook him, nearly hitting him against the wall.

“You be quiet,” Odin demanded of Peter. “Loki, what is this foolishness? What have you done? Answer me!”

“Father let him go!” Loki demanded, stepping forward, his eyes flashing. “He is a servant and you cannot treat servants as such. I have employed Peter as a paid servant. I decided I no longer want a personal omega so he will be a servant instead.”

“I am the one to employ servants in this household!” Odin shouted, shaking Peter again. “You

have no authority over that, and I will treat any servant any way I want to! Do you not realize what you have done? Do you not realize how this could affect your marriage, your future?"

"I have the authority to give my omega freedom and if I desire to have him on as a servant so long as I can pay him then that is my right as a son of Odin," Loki growled. "Now let him go."

"You have no such rights in this household!" Odin spat. "Know your place, apologize, and I will let him go."

"I will not," Loki spat right back. "I have nothing to apologize for. I was not outside of my rights when I made this decision. My place is as a son of Odin, and I will not grovel and pretend it isn't simply to placate your egotistical ideas."

"You are not a true son of Odin so you have no authority over who is employed here or what is done with such a servant. I am Lord Odin, and you are not my son, and you will learn your place no matter how I have to teach you!" Odin spat, and the next action happened before Loki could open his mouth to apologize or stop it.

For one moment, Odin was grabbing Peter's arm in a bruising grip, and then in sickening slow motion Odin shook him, and then, whether on accident or on purpose it wasn't clear, Peter slipped from his grasp. Loki cried out, watching in horror as Peter yelped, teetered, and then went crashing down the stairs where he landed in a crumpled heap, his arms wrapped around his head to protect it. Loki dashed forward, kneeling beside Peter and hushing him when the boy cried out. One arm now hung loosely, and Peter rolled into a ball for a moment, a yelping cry breaking from between his lips. Loki's hands hovered over Peter body for a moment, wincing when Peter whimpered and a sob tore from his mouth, tears bubbling up and overflowing down his cheeks.

Still, Peter managed to whisper out that that he was alright. When Loki turned his face up to his father's, dangerous hatred sparked in his eyes.

"Not a true son of Odin? Liar! Oh you have lied about so much, for so long, perhaps in your old age you've grown senile and have forgotten the truth yourself, but I know the truth now, Father. You cannot lie to me anymore. I am a true son of Odin, aren't I? You've tried so hard to erase the evidence, to erase everything. You were so desperate to erase your crime that you killed her, didn't you? But now I know the truth and you can no longer hide the monster that you are!"

"Loki?" Odin asked slowly, paling and taking a step back, yet Loki advanced on him, advanced up the stairs.

"I found out, Father, what truly happened to my mother. You killed her! You had a child with her, and were so ashamed that you heralded a child with a servant that you killed her! You killed my mother! But I lived, and I'm here, and I know everything now Father! I know what you've done!"

"Loki please, let me explain," Odin began, but Loki simply advanced further up the stairs, snarling.

"Explain what? That you've lied to me for years? That you killed my mother? What is there to explain? You never loved me! You only took me in to save yourself from a hanging for murder! You always claimed that you cared for me, that you controlled my life because it was in my best interest, but now I know that I have never been anything more than your dirty secret, locked away in the attic so that I may never find out the truth! But now I know the truth and I could undo everything now, couldn't I? I could ruin you, I could tear you apart! But I am not like you, Father. I care not for vengeance, or murder, or violence! No, instead I will take my liberty to live my life as I please. For the first time in all my years, I refuse to do as you say. I no longer care to impress you, to make you proud. I don't give a damn what you think of my actions! So what if I do love

omegas? So what if I have made love to an omega servant? It is no more than what you have done, and I didn't turn around and kill the omega I made love to! I no longer care to hide who I am. I never lied when I said I loved alphas, but I love omegas no less and I will no longer hide that fact! And what will you do? Tell the world? Because I have more than enough I could tell the world about you, Father! Father? I... Father, what's wrong? What's going on?"

Loki's eyes widened and he let out a cry when Odin blinked at him for a moment, and then began to lose his balance. When the man began to topple down the stairs, Loki let out another cry and caught his father, pulling him close to keep him from joining Peter. Loki stared at him in horror for only a moment more, before he swallowed hard then he cried out, "Help! Thor, someone, where are you? Help! I... we need a doctor! Something is wrong with father!"

"Loki, what's going on?" Thor dashed into the room, and then stumbled to a stop, before anger filled his eyes and he demanded, "What did you do?"

"Nothing! I... he just fell and.... Thor we don't have time for this, we need a doctor!" Loki shouted, holding his father close. Thor hesitated for only a moment, before he nodded and dashed to the small communication device Tony had provided the family with. Thor was relieved when he heard Tony's voice through the speaker, and he explained everything quickly before another man came on the line for a moment.

"Dr Banner will be here shortly," Thor dashed back.

Odin opened his mouth to speak, however the words came out garbled and Loki licked his lips, swallowing hard.

"It'll be okay father," Loki spoke, though the expression he gave Thor spoke differently. Still he swallowed hard and added, "The doctor will be here soon, you'll be okay."

"How did this happen?" Thor demanded again, glaring at Loki. "What did you do? How did this happen?"

"I don't know," Loki hissed. "And this is not the time for blame. Please, check on Peter? Please?"

"Peter?" Thor blinked, seeming to notice Peter for the first time. The boy was now sitting up, holding his arm and keening softly, hiccuping through his tears, one ankle tilted in a way that made Thor wince. Finally he nodded, hurrying to join Peter at the bottom of the stairs.

"What's happening?" Peter whispered, breaking off in a gasping sob. "Is Master Odin alright?"

"I do not know," Thor murmured. "But... are you alright? What happened?"

"I... fell, M'Lord," Peter whimpered. "I don't know, I... I..." Peter let out a sobbing gasp again, trying to curl up and then crying out when he moved.

Thor bit his lip, examining Peter's shoulder and ankle before stating, "A doctor will be here soon. He's very intelligent. He will help you."

"You should be with your father," Peter gasped out. "I'll be alright. Go be with your father."

Thor studied him, hesitating for only a moment before moving back to Odin's side. Loki didn't seem to notice or complain, too much concerned with holding his father close and pushing back tears as Odin again tried and failed to speak in a way Loki could understand.

"You'll be okay," Loki promised again. "You'll be alright Father. The doctor will be here and then

you'll be alright. It'll be alright. When the doctor gets here you'll be okay again, you'll see!"

Thor looked between Loki and Odin, before sighing and wrapping an arm around his trembling little brother's shoulders.

*You hold me down, you hold me up Oh Daddy, are we out of luck?
You brought me up to bring me down, You shut me in, you shut me out*

*I'm going, I'm going to heaven I'm going, I'm going to hell
If nobody could see I'd hold my hand out to be held
I wish that you could just admit that you did bad things too*

Instead of criticizing me so I don't look at you

Chapter End Notes

So... that was a lot! What do you think of everything that happened in this chapter? Do you like that Loki gave Peter his freedom? How do you feel about the fact that Peter went back with Loki even though he's now free? And what about what happened to Odin? What will Odin do now he knows...? I'm looking forward to your thoughts and opinions as we enter a turning point in the fic and begin to explore other characters, for example Tony...

Mowgli's Road

Chapter Notes

Trigger warning for references to conversion therapy and trigger warning for an adverse health event (stroke)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

You say Y-E-S to everything

Will that guarantee you a win?

Do you think you will be good enough

To love others and to be loved?

Oh, lord now I can see

The cutlery will keep on chasing me (forsaken road)

There's a fork in the road, I do as I am told

And I don't know who I want to be

Dr Banner was a small, unassuming sort of man, but the moment he dashed into the room he gained everyone's complete attention. He glanced first at Peter, studying him with a clinical gaze, before hurrying to Odin's side.

"What happened?" Dr Banner demanded, opening up his rather large medical bag as he studied Odin carefully.

"We were just talking," Loki explained, wiping his cheeks in a weak attempt to appear composed. "And he suddenly lost speech. He wasn't responding, and then he stumbled, but I caught him."

"Lord Odin?" Dr Banner asked, snapping his fingers lightly. "Can you understand me? Nod if you understand me."

Odin blinked, dazed for a moment as he clumsily tried to form words before giving up and letting out a weak nod. Bruce nodded, pulling a little white powder and then mixing it with a bit of liquid he also had in his bag.

"Lord Odin," Dr Banner commanded. "It may be hard, but I'm going to have you swallow this. Boys, can you help hold his head back? Thank you. Help me watch for any signs of choking, yes? Alright, this is going to help you. Come on."

For a moment Odin turned his head away, trying to avoid the drink, however after a moment Dr Banner had the drink to his lips and the man managed to swallow instinctively. Dr Banner examined him for a moment more, watching that there were no signs of choking, before he sighed and nodded.

“That is all I can do for now,” Dr Banner murmured. “Would you two be able to move your father to his bed? Stay with him, and come and tell me if he appears to be getting worse. I must see to the boy at the bottom of the stairs. Keep your father sitting up, do not lay him flat. I shall be up with you in a moment.”

“Doctor,” Thor asked softly, looking between his father and the other man. “There is nothing else you can do? Will he be alright?”

“Well... That medicine I administered should help some, but we will know more with time,” Dr Banner replied with a soft sigh. “I’m sorry, there is nothing else I can do now. Now, please if you’ll excuse me I have another patient to attend to.”

Thor looked ready to ask something else, but instead he had to intervene when his younger brother tried to lift Odin to bring him to bed. Thor sighed, glancing at Peter once before moving to assist his brother, helping his father stumble up towards his room.

Peter was still crying softly, and he flinched away from the alpha that knelt beside him. Still, the doctor had a kind look in his face that Peter began to instantly trust, so he risked a smile.

“My name is Bruce,” the doctor murmured. “May I see your shoulder, please? Can you lay flat for me?”

Slowly, Peter did as he was told, yelping softly when the man carefully felt it. He also poked at Peter’s hand, asking the boy to try and make a fist. After this, Dr Banner sighed softly, taking a clean white cloth from his hand and holding it out to Peter.

“Your shoulder has... Come out of place,” Bruce murmured. “It’s good I was called, this must be dealt with quickly. It may hurt when I fix it. Do you want to bite down on this cloth?”

“Yes, thank you,” Peter whimpered softly, taking the cloth between his teeth. He still yelped softly when Bruce set his shoulder, though the pain began improving rapidly. Dr Banner then examined his ankle, asking permission before removing Peter’s shoe and sock. After gently prodding at it, he took out a long bandage and wrapped up Peter’s foot and ankle, tucking the bandage in at the top.

“Not broken,” Bruce explained once he was done. “Just sprained. I don’t want you walking on it, though an occasional limp here and there shouldn’t hinder the healing. When you’re resting keep it elevated, yes? Now, here, I have something to help with the pain. Would you like it?”

“Yes, thank you,” Peter murmured, a little shocked by the man’s treatment. He gratefully accepted the medicine, studying Dr Banner with wide eyes as the man tucked things back into his medical bag. Once he was done, he carefully helped Peter stand on his good foot, one arm wrapped around Peter’s shoulders. He began helping Peter into the sitting room where he set Peter on the loveseat, lifting his ankle onto a cushion.

“Dr Banner,” Peter began to speak, however the alpha held up a hand and shook his head.

“Bruce, please,” the man smiled,

“Bruce,” Peter corrected himself. “Who, uh, who are you? You know Lord Stark? Are you a country doctor from around here? Sorry, also thank you! I’m sorry, I should have said that earlier, but everything is happening so quickly!”

“Ah, indeed,” Bruce chuckled. “As things always seem to when there are injuries to attend to. Yes, I do know Tony. I’m actually living at Stark Manor at the moment. Unfortunately my grant at Cambridge was withdrawn because the university did not like the research I was conducting, and I

had an unfortunate... miscalculation of a tonic's composition when the university demanded results more quickly than was scientifically possible. Anyway, it was enough for me to have to leave my position so I am continuing my research at Tony's place."

"What was your research?" Peter asked, eyes wide with curiosity. "Was it science? I love science! I'm sorry, I know I'm not meant to but... Well I've never met a true scientist before."

"It was indeed," Bruce chuckled. "I'm afraid I must go check on my other patient now, but perhaps you and I can speak about it later. Just rest, don't try to move around very much. I believe I saw Shuri coming up the road on my way here. I'd like to have given her a ride, but I didn't know if I could stop to pick her up if someone was imminently dying. Anyway, she should be here soon. Perhaps you can speak with her about my work. She knows everything about my work, probably more than I do!"

"Really?" Peter's jaw dropped. "Thank you, I had no idea! She never told me that."

"Probably not allowed to. I'm not certain Lord Odin approves of omegas even knowing science exists," Bruce chuckled, before hurrying from the room. He found Odin upstairs in bed, his family surrounding him. Frigga had one arm around each of her sons, a brave look on her face as she murmured soft things to her family. A beta man stood in the corner, his head bowed and hands clasped behind his back. Dr Banner vaguely recognized him as Odin's manservant. Bruce entered quietly, hurrying over to examine Odin. He smiled at what he found, humming softly now and then. Odin tried speaking again, and this time managed something that sounded like a sentence. Still, Bruce hushed him gently. "Just rest, My Lord. You must not strain yourself. You are already looking some improved, and I'm very proud of you, but you must rest now. I wish to speak with your family for a moment, alright? Just rest."

Bruce made to stand, but Odin reached one hand out and held on tightly to Thor, who looked up helplessly. Bruce nodded, consenting for Thor to stay with his father while he instead pulled Frigga and Loki aside.

"What's happened to him?" Frigga demanded quietly. "Is this something that he can recover from?"

"I believe he has suffered from a clot of blood in his brain," Bruce spoke softly. "I have developed a medication for this, which I gave him. The fact that he is still mentally present now is promising, and his pulse is improved. We can only continue to watch him, now, but I must be honest with you, My Lady. This sort of accident can have lasting effects. I believe your husband will live, but he may not be exactly who you remember. He may need assistance with eating, dressing, what all is unknown right now. It seems he may struggle to speak as well, though he does appear to understand what is being told to him."

"Thank you, Doctor," Frigga murmured.

"How does Peter fare?" Loki spoke up, eyes worried. "Will he be alright?"

"Yes, he'll be fine," Bruce promised. "I've fixed his shoulder and though he will struggle to walk, he should fully recover over the next few weeks."

"He didn't fall," Loki suddenly muttered, eyes angry. "Father pushed him. He threw him down the stairs."

"Loki!" Frigga hissed angrily. "You must not say such things!"

“Well he did,” Loki replied in a hushed voice. “I just thought the doctor should know.”

“Mother!” Thor suddenly spoke, glancing over. “Father is trying to say something.”

“Yes, dear?” Frigga hurried back over. The man’s voice was weak, not quite intelligible, but Frigga leaned close, pressing her ear close so that she might hear him. What he said, though, made her frown and shake her head. Frigga pressed a gently hand to his brow, stroking his hair back as she murmured, “You do not mean that. You have been through so much today. The doctor is right, you must rest. You know not what you are saying, but a good rest will make you feel better. Thank you, doctor, for what you have done. How long do you think recovery will be?”

“It’s hard to know,” Bruce admitted softly. “It differs for everyone.”

“Well,” Frigga nodded once. “You must rest for now and in a little while I shall ask again what you think, yes?”

“What did he say, mother?” Thor asked curiously, biting his lip at the angry frown on his father’s face.

“He knows not what he says,” she replied confidently. “Come, my sons, you must allow your father to rest. I will stay with him, and-”

Frigga was interrupted by Odin’s insistent grunt, and she hesitantly turned back to him.

“My dear,” Frigga murmured, reaching out a hand to placate him, yet Odin batted the hand away and cleared his throat roughly.

“Go!” Odin suddenly commanded, eyes flashing with anger. Loki stared in horror as his father lifted a shaking hand, pointed at him, and then shouted again. “Go!”

“Odin, please, you’re going to make a scene in front of the doctor,” Frigga murmured, yet Odin clumsily pushed her away and continued pointing with one hand.

“Out!” Odin growled.

“Father?” Thor murmured, gently helping the man lower his arm as Loki paled, standing frozen up the doorway. Thor gave his clearly shocked and slightly frightened looking brother a kind look before turning back to Odin and softly stating, “Mother is right. You must rest now, Father. You are confused.”

“No!” Odin spat, eyes glaring with anger. Bruce reached over to check the man’s pulse, but Odin clumsily yanked his wrist away and rumbled out. “Go! Go with omega! Go! Go now! Not my son! Not my son anymore! Go, out, go!”

Odin was practically shaking with anger, and Bruce gently pushed him back into the sheets, trying desperately to comfort him and command the man to calm. Loki still stood frozen by the door, his face pale, yet Frigga stood and gently led him from the room, an arm around her pale son’s trembling shoulders.

“Don’t worry, Loki,” Frigga murmured. “You just stay right out here for the moment, alright? Your father is confused after what he has been through. You just stay here until he calms down, alright? Please?”

“He... He said I’m not his son anymore,” Loki’s voice was hushed, his eyes wide in fright, but Frigga rubbed his back and hushed him gently.

“He knows not what he’s saying,” Frigga murmured. “You will always be our son. Now I must go back with him-”

“Wait, mother,” Loki stopped her. For a moment he opened and closed his mouth seeming unable to speak, his face chalky and a stark contrast against his black hair. “No I... He knows exactly what he’s saying. I... This is my fault. I did this, mother, I... Oh God, what am I going to do? I did this to him.”

“No, Loki, these things just happen sometimes. You are not to blame,” Frigga murmured gently, pulling her son into her arms. “Hush, my darling boy. You are not to blame.”

“But I am,” Loki pulled away, refusing to acknowledge the moisture in his eyes. “Mother, I was shouting at him. I... I know, mother. I told him that I know. Mother I... Oh mother, everything is wrong now and... And you! You knew, didn’t you! You must have known!”

“Known what, Loki?” Frigga asked gently.

“I know, mother, I know now! I know I am truly his son, and yet for all of these years he claimed that I was not! I know now that he refused to acknowledge me because he sired me with a serving girl from the village, and that he killed her! He killed her, mother! Did you not know this? You must have known this!”

“Loki!” Frigga frowned deeply. “Do not accuse your father of such things! Your father is not a murderer.”

“No? Then what happened to the serving girl? You must have known I was his son! Did you? Mother please, please do not lie to me. Did you know?” Loki begged, and oh so slowly Frigga nodded.

“Yes, I did know,” Frigga murmured. “And we should not have hid it. I wanted to tell you, Loki, but then your father did not wish to, and I wanted to spare you the pain of knowing that you were a...”

“A bastard child?” Loki spat, yet he flinched when his mother lightly shook him.

“Do not call yourself as such,” she frowned deeply. “You are my son either way, and I do not like to hear you speak of yourself in such terms!”

“You mean with the truth?” Loki growled.

“I mean exactly what I said,” Frigga replied sternly. “And anyway no, your father did not kill that omega. She grew sick with some strange illness. I cannot say what, but it may have been what I had, for I too was very ill at that time.”

“You were?” Loki frowned, his eyebrows drawing together.

“Yes, and I have always feared that I somehow passed my sickness to her, and if I did I will be eternally sorry for doing so. Fárbauti was such a kind woman, and had grown to be a very dear friend of mine. I wish nearly every day that I could have been with her when she breathed her last. But I made a promise to her and to myself that I would care for you the way she would have wanted me to. You are my son, Loki, and I love you most dearly.”

Frigga pulled Loki into her arms, and he clutched at her, allowing himself comfort in that moment. Still, he pulled away a moment later, studying her carefully.

"I had not realized you were also ill, then," Loki murmured. "So... so there is some chance that you did pass it to her?"

"I fear so," Frigga murmured.

"Oh Lord," Loki stumbled slightly, reaching out to the wall for purchase. "What have I done..."

"It is not your fault," Frigga insisted again. "What happened to your father has happened to many people, and it is not the fault of any except nature."

"But I pushed it to happen," Loki whimpered softly. "I told him I knew, I told him that I'd... I'd... Mother, I don't know what to do. I'm afraid, Mother. In London something began to happen and I know not how to stop it, nor even if I want to stop it. Mother, I granted Peter his freedom, and then he and I... We laid together."

"You what?" Frigga paled slightly. "Does your father know?"

"Yes, that's what led to all of this!" Loki cried softly, his hand waving towards the room. "Mother, what am I going to do?"

"Do you love Peter?" Frigga asked softly. "Did you mean what you did in earnest?"

"I don't know! Yes, maybe, I don't know," Loki pressed his eyes shut. "Yes, yes I think I did."

"Then you have my blessing," Frigga replied gently, cupping his cheeks in her hands.

"But mother, he is another omega!" Loki wailed softly.

"And you are my son," Frigga replied. "And I will always support whatever makes you happy."

"But last time--"

"I will not allow that man into this manor again," Frigga murmured. "I have little power over your father, but I will fight with all my worth to keep you safe from him. You must not be put in his care again. Perhaps this can get be kept secret from the world. Perhaps your father can be convinced that you didn't mean it. Either way, you must not go back into his clutches. I was scarcely able to make him leave the first time. He will not return, I will not let him hurt you anymore."

"Mother," Loki turned suddenly to find Thor poking his head out of the door. "Father is asking for you."

"Do not leave, Loki," Frigga commanded him. "You stay here, alright?"

"Yes Mother," Loki murmured, watching her disappear into the room. Thor hovered in the doorway, sighing softly before he slowly approached the omega.

"Brother," Thor murmured. "I... Is it true?"

"Is what true?" Loki demanded bitterly wiping stubbornly at his cheeks.

"Everything you just said," Thor murmured. "I was standing behind the door for the past few minutes. I... Surely it cannot be true."

"I thought listening behind closed door was more my style," Loki spat bitterly, glaring at Thor. "None of this was your business. You weren't meant to hear any of it."

"You are my brother, that makes it my business," Thor replied seriously. "But surely it cannot be true. Please, father is not a liar. Surely he could not have lied for all of these years!"

"You heard Mother," Loki growled softly. "It is true. Evidently I am your brother, truly in blood, and yet father has denied me since the moment I was born."

"How did you learn of this?" Thor asked softly. "Who did you speak to in London? Who would know of such a family secret?"

"It doesn't matter," Loki glared. "They have been banished from the house same as now I have been."

"That isn't the only thing I heard," Thor added softly. "Is it true that you have laid with Peter?"

"You ask too many questions," Loki glared at him, but this answer still seemed to satisfy Thor for he had to stop to take a deep breath.

"You used to accuse me of not asking enough questions when our tutor came to the house," Thor attempted weakly to add a bit of humor to the situation. He deflected the weak glare that Loki sent him, and he reached out to clasp a hand behind Loki's neck. "Brother, listen to me. Father is weak, confused, but I cannot blame you for this. It sounds to me that you had an awful shock in London, and I only wish you'd brought this to me before father. Perhaps I could have helped you!"

"No one helps me," Loki glared. "Least of all you. I have learned that since I was a child."

"No, I would have helped you," Thor insisted. "But I do not know if I can help you now. Father is not fully comprehensible, but through his mutterings he has made a command."

"What?" Loki paled. "What is it?"

"He has commanded you and Peter to leave the manor. I fear that he wishes to have your name revoked. I fear that you will not be allowed to return," Thor murmured softly, swallowing hard. "But I want this no more than you do. I tried to reason with him but he is in no state to speak nor be reasoned with. He can scarcely speak nor think right now, it seems. He... It's like he isn't father."

Thor's hand dropped down from Loki's neck, yet the younger brother bit his lip and then poked gently at Thor's side, gazing up at him.

"He'll be alright," Loki murmured, sounding completely sure of himself. "Don't worry yourself for father. He'll be fine. He's strong, he's always fine."

"I'm not certain he will be, not this time," Thor murmured, yet Loki shook his head and poked at Thor again.

"Thor, it's Father, he will be alright. Don't look like that, he'll pull out of this."

"And if he does, what of you? If he has already made up his mind, then what of you? He is still the Lord of the manor, and his word is final. I will fight for you, Loki, because you are very dear to me, but my word is nothing compared to father's."

"I too will be alright," Loki decided, swallowing hard. "I always am, aren't I? And as you said, father is confused now, he may yet change his mind. Is he recovering at all, though? Is he changed?"

"Very little, but Doctor Banner says it will take time," Thor replied. "He says that we must

encourage independence for father and he might learn again!”

“So then there may be hope,” Loki pointed out. “And father might change his mind yet.”

“There is one thing,” Thor sighed deeply, eyes on the ground. “One way for you to stay. Peter will have to go, there is no way for him to stay here, but brother I cannot see you turned to the streets by father. If he continues as he is, you know what was offered last time. He commanded that if this happened again that you could take that option and remain at the manor. I know what mother just said, but think about it Loki. If you allow yourself to be subject to his lessons then I know father will let you stay!”

“Thor,” Loki paled, taking a step back. “Please, you can’t be serious.”

“Loki, I will not see my brother cast to London with no help from me. I cannot watch you be thrown from the house like a criminal. As father’s heir I must carry out his commands, you know I must, but he made that command before and I believe it should still stand. Please, please think deeply about that option and then you may stay here with father and mother!”

“Thor, please, you know I can’t,” Loki paled, licking his suddenly dry lips. “Please, please you can’t do that to me.”

“I would never do anything to you, but you could choose that road and then you could stay!” Thor insisted hopefully, taking a step towards his retreating brother. “It worked last time, didn’t it? At least for a while!”

“Thor, listen to me. I won’t, I can’t, you cannot ask me to,” Loki had backed himself against a wall, his eyes wide as they darted about as if looking for escape. “Please, don’t bring that man back here. I cannot, not again. I would sooner leave than allow myself to be subject to his lessons.”

“But then you can stay,” Thor insisted softly. “You can stay here, at home, where you will be safe.”

“I won’t be safe with him here.”

“Loki, brother, please. I care so deeply for you and I do not want you hurt, I could not stand the thought of you alone in London doing anything to survive. Let me help you. If father does not change his mind, if he continues to deny you as his son and states that you must go, I’m certain this would change his mind! Please, I only wish to help you.”

“I would sooner leave. I would sooner die,” Loki spat, his eye ablaze. Those words clearly shocked Thor, for he stopped in his tracks and even stumbled back slightly, staring at Loki with absolute horror.

“Brother,” Thor tried to begin, but Loki shook his head, his eyes filling with tears.

“No!” Loki shouted angrily, wringing his hands, hatred creeping onto his face. “I would sooner die than be subject to his lessons again! You cannot do that! Please, you can’t do that to me! And besides, what of Peter? Will he truly be safe, or will word get out and then he is sent away to one of those places! Only he doesn’t have money like us! He would never be let out. You know not what it’s like, Thor! It’s like hell on Earth. Pray that you never find out. I cannot go through that again, and I cannot allow Peter to be subject to that for the rest of his life.”

“Surely the lessons can’t be bad as all that. Look, you are standing here now and in one piece! And even if the lessons do not cure you, you can just pretend that you no longer desire omegas and then he’ll go away! Please Loki, I will support you and help you. I wouldn’t let him hurt you,” Thor

insisted, but Loki flinched away.

“You haven’t the slightest idea what he’s like. There is a reason father sent you on a journey to visit Hogan’s homeland during that time and it wasn’t so you could see a change of pace,” Loki reached up to press his fingers to his collar, flinching as he did so and shutting his eyes for a moment. “It’s like the memories are burned into my mind the same way he burned the lessons into my skin. I cannot tolerate it again. I would not recover. Please, I never thought I would grovel before you but I am begging you, please don’t let him come here. I can’t again. Please, please I can’t.”

“Loki, I don’t want this either, but I don’t want to see you go,” Thor murmured, swallowing hard. “But I know not what to do. I have to follow out father’s command, I have no choice, no matter how much it pains me. You know that I do. And you know that I don’t want to. You know that! You know that if I had my way I would not be here. You know that if I had my way I would be at Tony’s, or better yet on a ship at sea. You know that. You and I know both what they all think of both of us, that you are heartless and that I am no more than father’s golden automaton, but I at least cannot change this. I must stay, I must remain with father, and I must listen to his orders. I must make father proud.”

“Because he could never be proud of me?” Loki spat, glaring at Thor.

“Loki, please,” Thor murmured. “I don’t know what to do, but I desperately wish for you to stay here at home. I can’t bear for you to go.”

“I can’t stay here if that is the stipulation,” Loki murmured softly, closing his eyes. “I’m sorry, but I cannot.”

“Then where will you go?” Thor murmured.

“Perhaps to Tony’s,” Loki murmured. “Perhaps he will take us. If not there, then to London, to Peter’s family. We will find a place. You need not worry for us.”

“Loki,” Thor reached out to clasp the back of his neck again. “You will always be my brother. Please know that. No matter what father does, you will always be my brother.”

“Perhaps,” Loki replied, swallowing hard and lifting his chin. “Now you’d best get back to your father.”

“And your father,” Thor replied, yet Loki shook his head.

“Not any more,” Loki murmured. “But before I go I must get something from my room.”

“Of course, anything you need,” Thor nodded, however both brothers looked up in surprise when Odin’s manservant exited the room, a frown on his face. Thor frowned right back, ducking his head as he murmured, “Hello Muninn.”

“M’Lord commands that Loki must leave at once,” the man sighed. “Immediately. I am to escort him and the omega Peter from the house.”

“Now?” Loki paled as Muninn stepped into his personal space, swept Loki’s long hair aside, and began to fiddle with his collar. His fingers were rough against the nape of Loki’s neck, and the omega trembled slightly, eyes wide as his gaze met his brother’s.

“Wait, what about the lessons?” Thor demanded, but Loki paled and shook his head. “Muninn, what are you doing with my brother?”

“No, I don’t want the lessons, I just... I need to get something from my room, I wish to say goodbye to mother!” Loki took a step away, but the large beta caught his arm easily and in one fluid motion he pulled the collar off and tossed it aside. The heavy metal hit the carpet with a soft thud, and Loki’s jaw dropped as he stared at in, frozen in a sort of shock.

“Loki, you are free from the name of Odin. You are no longer permitted to wear the title claiming you as such. I’m sorry, you must go now,” Muninn sighed, before grabbing him and yanking the omega towards the stairs. Loki’s teeth clattered from the sudden movement but it seemed to be enough to wake him from his shock when Muninn growled, “Come on.”

“Wait, just one thing from my room! Mother!” Loki replied, shaking himself from his state of shock and trying to break away and letting out a soft cry as the man began to pull him along. Thor’s jaw dropped and he tried to intervene, however one glance at his father’s room made him hesitate.

“Have care!” Thor suddenly commanded, frowning at the servant. “I realize we cannot disobey my father’s command, but you need not handle my brother so!”

“I’m sorry, M’Lord,” Muninn sighed. “But I have my orders.”

Loki yelped softly again as he was pulled along in a bruising grip. He turned his head back towards Thor, as if memorizing his face, before beginning to state, “Thor, please, papers-”

Loki broke off in another yelp, and Thor dashed to the edge of the staircase, holding onto the banister and gazing down at Loki in confusion.

“Papers?” He called after him. “What papers? Loki? Muninn stop!”

Thor was suddenly pushed aside as Frigga dashed down the stairs running after Muninn and find him lugging Peter up, Shuri staring at the scene in shock.

“M’lady?” Shuri asked. “What’s going on?”

“M’lady, you must leave,” Muninn commanded her, however she simply glared at him and then pulled Loki into a hug.

“My son,” she murmured, letting one hand tangle in his hair. “I am so sorry. I am so, so sorry. My son, I will not stop trying to allow you home. I will not stop trying to see you. But you must be brave. Go to Tony, I’m sure he’ll let you stay. Go to him, and we shall see each other again. I love you, Loki, more than words can describe.”

“I love you too, mother,” Loki whispered, but then he was being ripped from her arms and pulled toward the front steps, Peter whimpering and crying out as he stumbled along, his arm held in Muninn’s grasp. Peter got one last view of Shuri’s face, and Loki one last view of his mother’s, before the large front doors of Odin’s Manor slammed in their faces.

Peter let out a gasping whimper, nearly collapsing to the steps except that Loki caught him, easing him down.

“What happened?” Peter whimpered, his ankle throbbing. “What’s going on? Loki, what happened?”

“It’s gone,” Loki murmured in a frightened whisper, staring his hands and falling into an apparent state of shock. “It’s gone and I was so stupid. I let this happen! How could I have let this happen? I’ve been so foolish, and it was all taken so quickly...”

“Gone? What’s gone?” Peter blinked in shock. “What’s going on?”

“I think father has disinherited me,” Loki whispered. “I’m afraid you no longer have a job, and I no longer have a home.”

“So we’re being thrown out?” Peter’s jaw dropped. “Just like that?”

“Evidently,” Loki swallowed. “Just like that.”

“But how can he do that?” Peter tried to stumble towards Loki, but he nearly fell so instead Loki helped ease him to sit on the top step. “He is your father, how can he throw you from the house so quickly? Is he even in any mental state to do something like that?”

“Is it really all that surprising?” Loki spat, his eyes hard and his tone growing bitter. “He has never loved me the same as Thor, and now I know why. I was a stain on the family name anyway, and how he had washed his name clean of my filth.”

“But Loki, your title! What are you going to do?” Peter began, yet Loki silenced him with a sharp glare.

“You keep quiet,” Loki demanded, and Peter flinched back as if he’d been struck. “I’m going to think, and then we are going to survive. Leaving there is a far better alternative anyway than what either of us might have been subjected to.”

“What do you mean?” Peter blinked.

“You do not want to know,” was the bitter reply.

“But... But we have nowhere to go! Will we go back to Aunt May? I don’t think she can support both of us, especially since you’ve never worked before and now I’m injured!” Peter pointed out with a wince as he indicated his ankle.

“But you do have somewhere to go. Stark Manor always has room for two more,” Loki and Peter looked up as the front door opened and Dr Banner emerged, a soft smile dancing in his eyes despite the deep sigh that emerged from his lips as he looked at the two omegas. “Loki, I’m so sorry about what happened just now. It happened so fast and I could see no way of stopping it. It is unclear how much your father meant and how much was a result to the injury of his brain.”

“It doesn’t matter either way,” Loki whispered. “Either way the result is the same. And anyway we never asked for your help. You can’t expect us to go running to you and Tony the moment our luck turns. We are not like your group of misfits. However... however a roof over one’s head is not something to overlook. You think he would take us?” Loki asked slowly.

“I know he will,” Bruce smiled. “Come on, let me help you up Peter. The automobile is just down here. You’ll find a home at Stark Manor, I’ll make sure of it.”

“Bruce,” Loki spoke, reaching out and clasping his arm. “Thank you.”

“Don’t mention it,” Bruce replied. “Now, come along.”

Bruce began to help Peter down the steps, yet Loki paused there by the door. He felt numb, and for a moment he nearly wished that he could lose it all and topple down the stairs the same as his father had done, but he pushed the thought away with a hard swallow. Out of curiosity he tried the door and found it locked, but still he pressed his palm against it and allowed his forehead to rest there.

“Loki?” Bruce called, honking the horn. “Are you coming?”

Loki hesitated for a moment longer, taking a deep breath and soaking in the scent of his mother’s roses. They smelled so sweet and reminded him of a time long ago when he used to help his mother in the garden as a child. That was before she had been injured, before the man had come to teach Loki painful lessons, before he had chained Loki in his attic room so that even when he heard his mother’s cries as she fought against the robbers he could not run to her, could not help her. Loki shut his eyes tightly against the memories. It took him a long moment, but he managed to compose himself and he turned towards the automobile slowly.

“Of course,” Loki tilted his head to the side, inclined it slightly, and then hurried down the steps. Once he got in the car Peter reached over to squeeze his hand, the boy’s doe eyes studying Loki closely, yet the older omega simply turned away with a shallow nod and pressed his eyes shut tightly. It was easy to pretend that he was sitting in the garden with his mother, playing by the river with his brother, and it was these thoughts that kept him grounded as the car took them away from Odin Manor.

Chapter End Notes

And so we begin a new chapter of our characters’ lives... thanks again to lokislonleylady for continue to provide editing and help with ideas, and thank you to the core group of supports of this fic that read and comment and tell me what you think. You’re awesome! I have written ahead and so I have a fairly good idea about where this story is going, so any of you frostiron shippers can smile because (although shaky) that relationship will start seeing the light of day

Hypocrites

Chapter Notes

Beta:lokislonleylady :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

You're my last bone of contention

That could break at any mention

You're the last wall that will stand tall

'Til the end of the world

You say that love is not that easy

And that's the lesson that you teach me

So hypocritical, overly cynical

I'm sick and tired of all your preaching

Odin Manor had been grand in an old fashioned sort of way. Though Stark Manor appeared to have been built around the same time, it held an incredible futuristic appeal made possible by the machinery dotting the front gardens. Everything from automobiles, to flying machines, to things unrecognizable littered the ground. It was a strange collection, and yet it excited Peter to no end.

On the other hand, it did nothing to amuse Loki, who had been incredibly quiet the whole ride. When Peter had tried to start a conversation earlier he'd been easily silenced with a glare so sharp that he was surprised his head was still attached to his body. When the automobile rolled to a stop in front of the manor, Loki stubbornly refused to allow Dr Banner to assist him out of the car. Instead he sniffed and hopped out on his own, posture stiff as he began to march up the front steps of the manor.

"Thank you," Peter murmured softly to Bruce. "I apologize, I don't know what's gotten into him."

"No need to say sorry, it's probably shock," Bruce murmured. "Or just his usual disdain. He's always this way around us here at Stark Manor. We're not his idea of good company. Come on."

Peter followed Bruce, a little shocked himself by the kindness of this alpha. Peter had known many alphas in his life, and though his uncle was kind and Thor wasn't half bad, there was a gentleness to Bruce that was wholly unexpected. Of course, before he'd been tossed from Odin Manor, Shuri had been telling Peter the rumors about a botched tonic Bruce had taken that made him dangerous at times, but perhaps Peter could learn more about that later. For now, Peter followed Bruce and Loki up the steps where Bruce was knocking on the door. It took only a moment before the door was pulled open by a middle age beta who smiled and bowed briefly.

"Good to see you are home, doctor," the beta smiled. "And you brought guests? Oh! M'Lord Loki, please come in. Uh, doctor, Master Stark is in the middle of the meeting still..."

“I don’t care about your meetings,” Loki spat softly, stepping past the beta and into the foyer. “I’m well aware what goes on in the Manor if it can be called that.”

“Thank you, Jarvis,” Bruce chuckled weakly. “Yes, you already know Loki, now may I introduce Peter. They’re going to be staying with us for a while. May I speak with Tony please?”

“Right here!”

Peter looked up as Tony marched into the room, arms outstretched and a beaming smile on his face. It dropped off a bit, though, at the sight of Peter and Loki and he frowned as he slowly asked, “What’s going on? Did it not go well, Bruce? What are they doing here?”

“I was able to assist Lord Odin to some extent, however...”

“We’ve been banished from the house,” Loki finished with a soft growl. “We are no longer welcome there. Dr Banner mentioned we might find refuge here, if you’d be so kind My Lord.”

“Banished?” Tony’s jaw dropped, and he looked between Loki and Peter in utter confusion. His confusion seemed to only triple when he spotted Peter’s injury and Loki’s bare neck.

“Where is your collar?” Tony murmured, blinking at Loki. “And Peter, what happened to your foot?”

“I thought you didn’t believe in collars,” Loki hissed softly. “Is it now a problem that I don’t wear one?”

“Not at all, I’m just a bit... confused,” Tony blinked. “Are you both alright?”

“I think our fate is in your hands now,” Loki replied. “I think it is up to you to decide if we will be alright or not.”

“Yes, well, hm... Perhaps you’d best go into the sitting room so I can speak with Bruce for a moment,” Tony spoke quietly. Jarvis looked about ready to protest, however Tony shook his head and declared, “Yes, I realize we’re having a meeting, but I don’t need Peter collapsing in my foyer because he can no longer stand, and anyway if they are to stay here then Loki will just have to get used to the meetings.”

“Yes sir,” Jarvis nodded once. “Follow me.”

“Typical,” Loki muttered as he marched along after Jarvis. “That we wouldn’t even be involved in the discussion about our own fate.”

“Loki,” Peter murmured, nervously brushing the back of his hand against the other omega’s.

“They’re kind enough to consider letting us stay. Shouldn’t that be enough?”

“They’re hypocrites, the both of them,” Loki muttered. “But then I suppose we’d best get used to that around here.”

Loki looked ready to say more, however he was interrupted by Jarvis clearing his throat as they entered a sitting room filled with a moderately sized group made up of omegas, alphas, and betas. The whole group glanced over in surprise, and Peter broke into a smile when he spotted Bucky across the room.

“We have guests,” Jarvis declared. “For those who do not know, this is M’Lord Loki, and Peter.”

“Welcome!” Bucky hopped up from where he was seated beside Captain Rogers. “I’m surprised to see you both here! You’ve finally decided to join a meeting?”

“Hardly,” Loki sniffed. “And you’d best stop using my title unless you want the wrath of Odin to come reigning down on you.”

“Oh,” Bucky glanced between Peter and Loki meaningfully, though he quickly recovered and nodded. “I see. Well I still hope you’ll join us? Peter, what happened to your ankle?”

“I fell,” Peter lied easily. “It’s nothing.”

“I see,” Bucky nodded more slowly, frowning slightly. Still, he led the other two omegas over to the couch and helped Peter sit before returning to his chair beside Steve. “Loki, I’m sure you know some of the people here, but perhaps for Peter’s sake we’d best introduce ourselves? You already know Steve and I.”

“It’s good to see you, Peter,” Steve smiled kindly. “Do you need anything for your ankle? Ice perhaps?”

“I’m alright, thank you,” Peter murmured, biting his lip and glancing to the beta next to Steve. The beta sitting beside Steve oozed an easy sort of confidence and his feet were kicked up against the coffee table. He smirked lightly at Peter, lifting his drink towards him.

“I’m Sam,” the man introduced himself. “Pleasures all mine, I’m sure.”

“Clint,” the beta beside him declared before Peter got a chance to reply to Sam. “It’s nice to meet you. And tall dark and silent next to me is Natasha.”

The red haired alpha woman beside him chuckled softly, leaning forward and looking Peter up and down in a way that made him shiver lightly and avert his eyes. She didn’t speak, and the group moved onto the next member, a young omega woman.

“My name is Scarlet,” the omega murmured, smiling kindly at Peter. “It’s nice to meet you.”

“You too,” Peter replied kindly. “I like your dress.”

“Oh, thank you,” Scarlet flushed, glancing down at what could only be described as an evening dress. It seemed to nearly sparkle under Tony’s electric lights, and it matched the color of her name. Scarlet smoothed out a few wrinkles, adding, “It’s not necessarily practical, but all the same I’m glad you like it.”

“I’m Carol,” the final member, an alpha woman, spoke up before Peter had a chance to reply to Scarlet. “And I’m sorry to say this but I think I’d best be on my way.”

“You always are,” Clint smirked.

“Well the Navy isn’t going to run itself, now is it?” Carol shot back, standing up and gathering some papers into a messy stack. She stuffed the papers into a burlap bag and prepared to march from the room, however she hesitated halfway to the door and spoke again, asking, “Oh, hey Steve, when will the army have those data reports sent in?”

“Should be by the end of the week Admiral,” Steve saluted, and Carol beamed.

“Perfect,” she grinned, smiling at the omegas as she went by and grinning as she declared, “Hey Peter.”

“Hey...” Peter blinked, chuckled nervously. She laughed softly and gave a final wave before taking off.

“I’d best go too,” Scarlet stood, smoothing out her beautiful long dress. “I’ll be missed.”

“You be careful, alright?” Natasha commanded, speaking for the first time.

“I always am,” Scarlet replied. “Thank you inviting me. Perhaps next time I’ll convince my brother to come.”

“He isn’t at any fault if he chooses not to,” Natasha pointed out. “But I wish you luck. There are some leftovers in the kitchen. Please take them? And remember that there will always be a room open here for the both of you.”

“I will, thank you,” Scarlet murmured, and Peter watched as she slipped away.

“Well, since everyone is saying their goodbyes,” Sam spoke up. “Maybe it’s my turn now.”

“Sam, you’re staying here for the weekend,” Bucky spoke up dryly.

“Oh, that’s right,” Sam replied, a grin stretching onto his face. “And aren’t you happy that I am? Still, that doesn’t mean I have to stick around downstairs after everyone else has moved on. I’ve got much better things to do, don’t you know? Good to meet you, Peter, au revoir.”

With that, Sam also swept from the room, leaving the remaining group staring Loki and Peter down with various degrees of interest.

“So,” Natasha suddenly spoke, leaning forward in her chair. “I’m sorry, but am I the only one who’s wondering what you’re doing here, Loki? Call me crazy, but somehow I got the impression you didn’t like our group. And now you’ve gone and scared everyone away.”

“It looked to me like you did a good enough job of that all on your own,” Loki crossed his arms. “And anyway that’s my business. Bucky has been trying to get me to come for months. Perhaps I just finally decided to show up.”

“You know I’d almost believe you if you weren’t missing your favorite collar,” Natasha shot back. Loki snarled softly, and Steve cleared his throat with a soft cough.

“So,” he declared. “Welcome, Loki. Uh, you don’t have to of course, but you’re welcome to explain, if you’d like.”

Loki’s jaw tightened, and for a long moment the room was silent. Peter shifted, swallowing hard, and he almost opened his own mouth to explain when a door at the side of the room popped open and a beautiful, curly haired omega dressed in what could only be a nightgown flounced into the room.

“Where’s Tony?” She asked, leaning against the piano and batting her eyelashes.

“Oh he heard you coming and he ran the other way,” Loki replied simply, examining his fingernails.

“Loki,” Steve chastised. “He’s right through there, Polly.”

“Thanks love,” Polly giggled, flipping her hair at him and skipping off.

“How long this one been wasting Tony’s air?” Loki glanced around.

“Loki, stop it,” Steve repeated.

“What? I’m just saying that if she lasts a week you should congratulate her on setting a world record.”

“And you’re setting a world record for Nat’s patience,” Clint spoke up. “How’d you end up here?”

“If you must know, my father sent us from the Manor,” Loki crossed his arms and leaned back in his chair. “It seems we are no longer welcome there.”

“And by we you mean the both of you, together?” Natasha asked. Loki ground his teeth together, but he slowly nodded, sighing deeply. Natasha absorbed this information for a long moment, glancing between the two again before his gaze settled on Peter and she broke into a small smile. “I should congratulate you, Peter. It seems you’ve proven Tony right after all these years.”

“He’s done nothing of the kind,” Loki growled. “And if I’m going to have to tolerate this then I am leaving despite having nowhere to go. And somehow I was under the false impression that this was one place where judgements were not passed. I can’t say I’m surprised that I was wrong.”

“Loki, please, you’ve been here for five minutes and already you’re causing a fight?”

Loki glanced up and spotted Tony leaning against the doorway, and the omega flushed lightly, deflating slightly. Tony chuckled, stalking forward and collapsing into the armchair beside Steve, kicking his legs up onto the coffee table.

“So,” Tony declared. “Where were we? The impracticalities of corsets, was it?”

“Sounds like something Polly would be an expert in. Oh that’s right, where is Polly?” Loki glanced around.

“Oh, she’s gone,” Tony replied. “Something about a play rehearsal she has to attend. I can’t say that I keep track.”

“Already? And here I was hoping she’d stay for tea,” Loki shook his head in mock shame.

“Listen,” Steve spoke up, immediately calling attention back to himself. “Are we going to address what Loki is doing here or not?”

“Well I don’t know, do you want to address that Loki?” Tony asked.

“Not particularly,” Loki sniffed.

“So that would be a no,” Tony clapped. “Now is our meeting still going on or can I declare it over and grab some more of those sandwiches in the kitchen.”

“Scarlet took them home,” Natasha spoke up.

“Oh, really? Awful shame, I didn’t get to try any of the ham and cheese,” Tony sighed.

“Pity, seeing as you’re such a pig you deserve to have some ham,” Loki replied.

“Silence!” The shout echoed through the room, and Peter flinched. He forced his eyes back open, though, and spotted both Steve and Bucky with less than amused expressions. Indeed, the room had fallen into silence, and after a long moment of that Steve finally spoke. “Okay, enough is enough. I think it’s safe to say that our meeting is at a close. Clearly we’ll have to discuss our plans for the march next week. Any complaints? No? Great. Meeting dismissed. Come on, Buck, I think

there's enough personality in here without us getting involved."

"Good luck," Bucky murmured to Peter as they walked past. In fact, Peter watched in slight surprise as everyone filed from the room, leaving only himself, Tony, and Loki.

"Where's Bruce? He spot Polly and have to go lock himself in a closet?" Loki sniffed, but instead of being angry Tony simply sighed deeply and ran a hand over his face.

"Bruce had to go see another client. Before he left he, though, he told me what happened," Tony muttered. "Are you alright Peter? He said Odin hurt you."

"I'll be okay. Dr Banner gave me something for the pain and I'm okay now," Peter replies. "Thank you, M'Lord."

"It's just Tony," the alpha shook his head before shifting his gaze to Loki. The two gazed at each other silently for a very long time, the air thick with electricity. For a long time it appeared as if neither of them wanted to dare take the plunge, however the moment Tony opened his mouth, Loki began to speak.

"I think it's safe to say that you won't be forced into marrying me now," Loki folded his hands tightly in his lap, and the alpha across from him scoffed loudly.

"Is that really the first thing on your mind?" Tony rolled his eyes. "Come now, and I thought you'd have something interesting to say."

"I'm sorry that the topic of marriage is so uninteresting to you, but then that is hardly a surprise," Loki spat. "Polly, was it? And how many others are running around this week?"

"It was just the one."

"If you're lying I might almost be disappointed."

"Well lucky for you I'm not a liar," Tony leveled his gaze with Loki evenly, who crossed his arms and sat up a little more stiffly.

"No," Loki agreed. "You're just an omeganizer."

"I prefer the term playboy."

"I don't care," Loki spat back.

"Lord, uh, Mister, sorry I mean, Tony? Thank you, you know, for letting us stay here," Peter spoke up, clearing his throat and twisting his hands nervously in his lap. "It's much appreciated, actually, because we had no where else good to go. So thank you."

"Of course," Tony replied stiffly, pulling his gaze away from Loki. "My Manor is always open to those who need a place to stay. I'm sorry, I'm afraid we got off on the wrong foot again. Loki, look, I realize you've been through a lot today so let's just take a step back, shall we? Look, we shouldn't even think about weddings or anything of the kind right now when you're so clearly upset. You need to calm down and then we can talk about that later."

"Calm down?" Loki scoffed lightly, crossing his arms and looking away. "Yes, alright, I'll do my best to calm down."

"Anyway," Tony moved along quickly. "I'm surprised by what Bruce told me about the two of

you. I was under the impression that Peter was still available? That there wasn't anything going on between the two of you."

"Yes?" Loki asked slowly. "And?"

"Well... now there is something going on?" Tony asked slowly.

"Is that a problem, playboy?" Loki's crossed arms tightened just a little.

"Well, it's just that now you've been disinherited over it."

"Yes?" Loki pressed, his frown deepening.

"Well wouldn't you rather not be disinherited?"

"Is that really a question that you're asking me right now?" Loki spat, eyes flashing. "You're really asking me that?"

"Well I don't know, Bruce gave me the impression that you willingly declared your love for Peter in front of your father and that's why you got sent from the house. He gave me the impression that he'd spoken to your brother and discovered that you didn't even try to hide your new relationship? It's hard to imagine that an action like that would have any other consequence. So I ask you, did you want to be sent away? Because if you didn't want to be sent away you could have, I don't know, hid the relationship? Come to Bucky or me and we could have helped the two of you without it turning into this?"

"Just shut up please," Loki spat softly, pressing his eyes shut.

"No no, I'm actually curious what was running through your mind," Tony pressed on. "Please, enlighten me."

"Alright, nothing was going through my mind. Is that what you want to hear?" Loki spat softly. "I was stupid, I made a bad decision in anger, and now I've been stripped of my title and cast out for my stupid actions. Is that what you want to hear? Is that what you want me to say?"

"Well I didn't expect that to be your answer, quite honestly," Tony murmured. "And I don't understand. Loki, you could have hidden this so well. You're excellent at hiding things. You and I both know that. Why didn't you?"

"I don't want to talk about this anymore," Loki curled into himself and turned away. "Are we done here yet?"

"Look," Tony sighed, getting up and marching across the room. Loki peered up at him with reddened eyes, and the omega flinched lightly as Tony sat beside him on the couch. Loki didn't protest when Tony reached out to take his hand, squeezing it softly. In fact, Loki's eyes only seemed to turn more red, and he swallowed thickly when Tony began to speak in a far more gentle voice. "I'm sorry, okay? I truly am, Loki. I'm just surprised. I didn't expect this today at all, and I'm sorry for reacting the way I did. I only wish I could have intervened quicker, helped keep this from happening at all. You could have handled this so differently Loki, and I wish I'd been there to help you do that."

"Well you weren't," Loki spat softly, pushing back a soft sniffle. "And you never have been. But anyway it doesn't matter now, and I don't like your implication that I could never handle something like this on my own, that you should've been around just to save me from myself."

“Well am I wrong?” Tony replied softly. “Look what’s happened, Loki. I wish there was a way I could have prevented this.”

“Well you know what? You could have. There was a way. You could have by actually caring, by not flouncing around with a dozen other omegas on any given day, by actually speaking with me about my thoughts instead of relying on your warped sense of self righteousness, but you didn’t. Let that settle in your stomach,” Loki muttered, looking away with a hard swallow. For a long moment he didn’t speak, but when he did Peter could tell it was incredibly difficult for him, and Peter didn’t dare touch him for fear of shattering Loki’s already splintering glass. “You could have done everything differently, but you didn’t. You could acted on the respect you speak about all the time. You could have acted on self righteous claims of respect, and love, and kindness, but you didn’t. And you never do.”

“Loki,” Tony murmured, sighing in a sort of exasperation and running a shaking hand through his hair. “If only it were so easy as that.”

“Is it not?” Loki glared, eyes brimming with wetness that he stubbornly refused to let fall. “Look me in the eye and tell me that these are not things your group claims to value above all else.”

“Loki, love and goodness, it isn’t as easy as all that,” Tony sighed. “Yes that is the world we’re working towards, but we aren’t there yet.”

“Clearly,” Loki growled, trembling slightly as he blinked despite himself and a single droplet rolled down his cheek. Still, he managed to hold himself together and he stood abruptly, fists clenched at his sides. “Do I have a room to stay in?”

“Loki-“

“Yes or no?” Loki spat. “Never mind, I already know this manor has more than enough bedrooms. I’ll find one myself.”

“Loki, please, just stop for a moment. We aren’t done talking,” Tony tried, but Loki simply glared at him, another single tear dribbling down his cheek.

“I’m done,” Loki spat, his voice vehement, and then he stormed from the room, his footsteps picking up in pace once he was out the door. Peter swallowed hard as he gazed after him, chewing his lip and twisting his hands in his lap again. For a long moment Peter felt like he was alone, however a sound of clinking glass across the room made Peter flinch. He looked up to see Tony standing behind a bar beside the front windows, his hand shaking as he poured some sort of dark liquor for himself. His hand continued to shake as he tried to raise the glass to his lips, however he gave up a moment later and set the glass aside, running both hands over his face.

“Tony?” Peter murmured. “Are you alright?”

“You should run along after Loki,” Tony muttered. “Something tells me I’ve gone and ruined everything again.”

“Something tells me that he wants to be alone,” Peter murmured, standing and approaching the bar. “And that it’s best that you aren’t alone.”

“I’m fine,” Tony replied, raising the glass to his mouth and this time managing to down all the alcohol in one gulp. He went to pour another, yet Peter reached out to stop him. It was a bold move, and for a moment it made the alpha’s eyes flash in anger, however something about the omega standing in front of him gave Tony pause, and he slowly placed the liquor back on the bar.

“It’s wrong, you know,” Peter murmured. “To drown out troubles that way. It’s been the ruin of more than a few alphas. You don’t deserve that. You deserve better, even after what just happened between you and Loki.”

“He’s right, you know.”

Tony and Peter glanced up quickly, and the alpha seemed to deflate slightly, breaking into a small smile despite himself.

“Rhodey?” Tony chuckled softly, reaching out and accepting the hug that the other alpha gave him. “What are you doing here?”

“Bruce used your new device to contact me, said you might need some help or advice. But it looks like someone else has already got those bases covered. Lieutenant Colonel Rhodes, and you are?” The alpha smiled at Peter, a twinkling sort of merriment in his eyes that made Peter instantly like him.

“I’m Peter,” the omega replied. “It’s nice to meet you.”

“Nice to meet you as well,” the alpha smiled before catching Tony’s arm and leading him towards the couch. “I saw Bucky walking around out front. You still hosting those meetings?”

“You still going to tell me you don’t approve?” Tony raised an eyebrow.

“You know my feelings on the matter,” Rhodey murmured, casting a quick look at Peter. “But that isn’t why I’m here. Bruce said Loki was sent from his manor and is going to be staying here for a while?”

“We’ll see,” Tony sighed. “We didn’t get off on the right foot.”

“No surprise there,” Rhodey chuckled. “I’ve been telling you for years. This... thing you have with him, it’s only going to make you worse and worse until you completely crack. Don’t you think it’s time to cut your losses and look around? There are so many people, some right in front of you, who won’t kick you to the curb when you’re already down. I don’t want to see you turning out like your father.”

“I’m nothing like my father,” Tony spat softly.

“And I want to keep you from going that way,” Rhodey murmured. “Look around you, there’s a whole world right at your fingertips. You can’t save everyone, but you can still save yourself. And you need to start thinking about settling down. I saw the girl leaving here, Tony. I thought you were going to stop doing this?”

“Free love, it’s a lovely fad,” Tony grinned. “You should try it, you know?”

“No, I don’t think I’m interested. And I think you need to start thinking more seriously about your next actions. You don’t want to fly through so many people that you miss the one who could actually make you happy,” Rhodey sighed softly.

“Yeah, I guess we’ll see,” Tony replied, shaking his head. “For once you may be right.”

“I’m always right.”

“Hush, not in front of Peter, I have a reputation to uphold,” Tony chuckled, winking at the omega, who smiled weakly.

“Just think about it, okay?” Rhodey murmured. “Is Cap here? I want to speak with him.”

“If Bucky’s outside, Steve is probably nearby,” Tony chuckled. “You going so quickly?”

“Looks to me like you’re in good hands,” Rhodey shrugged, standing up. “Nice to meet you, Peter. Take care of him, alright?”

“I will, thank you Sir,” Peter flushed lightly. “Nice to meet you.”

Peter watched as the man clasped Tony’s shoulder and then filed from the room, leaving a light smile on Tony’s face.

“Rhodey, he and I go way back,” Tony chuckled softly as some form of explanation. “Back to when I almost went to University... Anyway, I’m sorry, were you going to say something? I think we got off track.”

“Are there always this many people coming in and out of your manor?” Peter chuckled softly, moving to sit beside Tony on the couch.

“Depends on the day,” Tony replied softly. “Depends on how accommodating I’m feeling. So, you read any more Verne?”

“Don’t know when I would’ve gotten a chance,” Peter chuckled.

“Ah, well that’s too bad. I have something better, though. Want to come and see my new flying machine? Almost got it off the ground yesterday. I thought it might cheer you up from what you’ve been through today,” Tony grinned as Peter’s jaw dropped. He chuckled softly as Tony wrapped an arm around his shoulders to help him walk, and he followed after the alpha as he began explaining the aerodynamics, leading Peter out into the fresh evening air.

Peter spotted Steve and Rhodey speaking to each other over by half an automobile. Bucky was nearby, swinging a pipe through the air like he was fencing with an invisible opponent. After a moment he let the pipe go, and Peter flinched as it clattered against a shed hard enough to leave a dent. Tony seemed utterly unconcerned as he stopped in front of an odd looking paper and wood craft with wings. He helped Peter sit on a metal chair beside the craft and then turned away to stroke the back of his hands along the wings tenderly.

“Here it is,” Tony purred, gazing at the machine gleefully. “What do you think?”

“It’s beautiful,” Peter murmured, staring at the machine in surprise. “Do you really think it’ll fly?”

“One day I think it will,” Tony murmured. “Like I said, yesterday we almost got off the ground. Can you imagine flying up with the birds? Can you imagine the freedom?”

“Maybe you should make it more narrow there at the front?” Peter murmured, chewing on his lip.

“What do you mean?” Tony asked, moving to stand beside Peter and gaze at the front of the craft.

“Well I don’t know. It’s just that maybe then the air would move over it more easily,” Peter pointed out. “Maybe it would make it... smoother in the air? It might help it take off, might help it actually fly, you know? And maybe these wooden sides should be smoothed better too? I feel like it’s very blocky, might hinder the airflow past it.”

“Peter, you’re brilliant!” Tony’s jaw dropped. “Of course! I don’t know why I didn’t think of that myself. It’s so obvious! We could cut this down here, and smooth this bit here, and honestly what

is this providing besides decoration anyway? You're so brilliant I could kiss you!"

Instead, Tony crouched beside Peter's chair and settled for a one armed hug. Peter chuckled softly, squeezing the man's arm and grinning as he replied, "Thank you! You're sweet."

A bit of movement from the house caught the corner of Peter's eye, and he turned his head as Tony hopped up and began fiddling with his machine. It was the flutter of a curtain, and Peter's heart sank just a bit when he saw the flash of Loki's black hair disappearing as the drapery fell back into place. For a moment Peter almost felt guilty, but Tony's shout of triumph caught Peter's attention, and he grinned and turned back to Tony and his machine, all thoughts of Loki fleeing from his brain.

Peter and Tony stayed out with the flying machine, fiddling with it and talking about ideas long after Steve and Bucky had gone inside. Still, eventually the sky turned a rusty shade of pink and Jarvis poked his head out the front to state that it was time for dinner, so Tony helped Peter hobble into the manor.

To Peter's utter surprise, Tony led him over to a place set out for him at the table. Too shocked to think of whatever station Peter was meant to be in, the boy happily thanked Tony and slipped into the chair beside Bucky. Steve, Natasha, Clint, and Sam also sat at the table, though Loki was conspicuously absent. Peter smiled when Bruce came into the room with Jarvis, helping to carry a covered tray. Peter asked about Loki and he was told by Jarvis that Loki wasn't feeling well and wouldn't be attending dinner. That hampered Peter's mood slightly, though Bucky's talk about a recent event in London pulled Peter's mind away from Loki.

"They don't know if the person will be caught," Bucky was saying. "But they suspect that they must be an alpha."

"But surely someone has some lead on the disappearances," Clint frowned. "No one vanishes into thin air."

"I suspect that T'Chaka did," Bucky murmured. "And I've been trying to tell the officers that ever since his death, but they refuse to believe me. They say that there's no evidence that he was investigating the disappearances, yet I'm certain I heard him speak about them on more than one occasion."

"Do you remember what context?" Natasha asked. "Why do you think he mentioned those disappearances?"

"Believe me, I remember him speaking of them! I never met the man face to face, but in fact I did attend more than one of his speeches. I never agreed with that alpha's methods, but our goals were no different. I remember him saying something about finding missing omegas in one of those speeches. Another time I'm certain I heard him speaking about it at a party we both attended. I wanted to speak with him about it but never got the chance."

"But surely he would have left notes behind," Natasha murmured. "One doesn't simply investigate kidnappings and leave absolutely no traces of such investigation."

"I don't know," Bucky sighed. "But I cannot deny what I heard."

"Anyway, point it," Steve spoke up. "The police are refusing to do any serious searching, so Bucky wants to confront them about this."

"Are you sure that's wise?" Clint asked slowly, glancing quickly at Natasha. "Seeing as how

you're already on their watch list?"

"Look, no one else is doing anything," Bucky sighed, his left hand clenching his fork. "I won't get angry, but someone needs to approach them and if no one else is going to do it, then I will."

"I'll come with you," Sam spoke up. When Bucky raised his eyebrows at him skeptically, the man chuckled. "What? I don't like anyone going missing either! When do we go?"

"I think we should wait until we have at least a little more proof," Steve spoke up. "Proof of something. Right now all we know is that there seem to be disappearances, but it's hard to know because those are only rumors that are being quickly covered up. We need to gather more testimonies before we act. Alright Bucky? We can't charge ahead without facts or they will go after you."

"Wait, I'm sorry, but what's happening?" Peter spoke up, swallowing hard when everyone turned to stare at him. Tony chuckled softly, and Bruce nudged his leg against Peter's under the table gently and cleared his throat.

"Recently an omega who used to attend our meetings went missing," Bruce explained. "We thought maybe they just decided to stop coming, but then another omega in Clint's and Natasha's acting group also went missing. We started investigating and it appeared that these sorts of disappearances aren't particularly uncommon these days, and no one is talking about it."

"So of course that means it's time we get involved," Tony grinned.

"And it is time!" Bucky declared. "How many more people have to go missing before we step forward and talk to someone?"

"Bucky," Steve sighed. "I know. I know how this hits close to home, and I agree completely, but I also don't want to see you stuck behind bars again. We've talked about this. We aren't going to solve anything if you go missing into the Queen's prison."

Bucky sighed, running one hand through his hair though he nodded weakly, finally placing his fork down with a soft clatter.

"So," Tony clapped, pulling people's attention back to dinner. "First course is served. Who wants red wine? Peter?"

Peter's eyes widened when the alpha poured him a glass, but he certainly wasn't going to complain. Omegas were never, ever allowed to drink any sort of alcohol, yet when he spotted Bucky raise his glass, Peter did so as well, savoring this moment so it could be called upon on a rainy day.

After dinner, everyone in the group was both warm and fuzzy from the drink, and pleasantly full from the delicious food. Peter followed the group as they stumbled off to the sitting room, collapsing into chairs while Clint took a seat at the piano and began to play softly. Bucky and Steve were curled up on the love seat kissing each other tenderly, and this incredibly public display of affection left Peter absolutely flabbergasted. Sam sat by the window, gazing out of it, while Natasha and Tony seemed to have a long conversation with their eyes before Tony stood and plopped down on the couch beside Peter. Bruce took this moment to step over from where he was hovering in the doorway with Jarvis, and Peter raised his eyebrows when Bruce settled next to the other alpha. The two alphas curled into each other's arms and Natasha pressed a kiss against his temple.

“How do you like all this?” Tony asked, startling Peter slightly as he stretched his arms out on the back of the couch.

“It’s very... different,” Peter murmured, yawning softly.

“Good different or bad different?” Tony asked, to which Peter could only shrug.

“Good different I think, but then it’s not like anything I ever knew existed,” Peter murmured.

“Why is this okay? I mean aren’t you meant to be a Lord? This isn’t how proper society behaves, is it?”

“I am a Lord,” Tony chuckled softly as he nodded. “You’re right, and so I figure I might as well use that to do whatever I like, and use it for something good. Something like this.”

“It’s very nice,” Peter decided with another yawn. “Thank you for letting us stay here.”

“Of course,” Tony murmured. “But you’d better get to bed. Bucky? Can you stop kissing long enough to get Peter up to Loki?”

“Why don’t you do it?” Bucky mumbled into another kiss, hands fisted into Steve’s hair.

“Because you know Loki would get the wrong idea and he’d have my head,” Tony sighed, standing up and marching over to the bar. Bucky sighed but he let Steve go, standing and wrapping his arm around Peter’s shoulders.

“Come on,” Bucky sighed softly. “Let’s get you upstairs. You okay Peter?”

“Uh huh,” Peter agreed, giggling softly. “Thanks Mr Bucky.”

“Yeah, don’t mention it,” Bucky rolled his eyes. When they got to the stairs, Bucky gave up helping Peter hobble along, and he scooped up the other omega, carrying him until they arrived at a closed door at the end of the hall. The door opened after Bucky knocked, and Loki wrinkled his nose slightly as Bucky carefully deposited Peter on the bed.

“He’s fine,” Bucky promised. “Did you get dinner?”

“I’m not hungry,” Loki frowned. “I’m surprised Tony isn’t the one bringing him up here, seeing as they had such a good time all afternoon out in the garden.”

“I’ve got much better things to do tonight than fight you,” Bucky sighed. “Take care of him, okay? I’ll see you in the morning.”

Loki glared after Bucky as the omega shut the door, but the moment he was gone Loki turned to Peter and carefully tucked him under the sheets.

“Do you wanna cuddle?” Peter asked Loki hopefully. “I’m cold, you’ll make me warm.”

“You need to sleep,” Loki murmured. “Get some rest and I’ll see you in the morning. Goodnight, Peter.”

“No, why can’t we cuddle?” Peter complained. He sat up and crossed his arms, pouting at Loki, but the older omega simply tucked him in again and moved towards the bathroom.

“Goodnight Peter,” Loki told him more forcefully, before he slipped into the washroom and began to run himself a bath.

Yeah you played the martyr for so long

That you can't do anything wrong

Who are you to tell me, tell me

Who to, to be, to be?

Yeah, you let, you let go of me

Chapter End Notes

And so we turn a new page in our hero's lives. Life at Stark Manor is like nothing Peter has experienced before; will he finally have a chance to bloom? And what about Loki? How will he fare in this new situation?

I hope you enjoyed and I look forward to your comments! What do you think of the mild frostiron? I haven't written much of this pairing before so I'm curious to hear your thoughts :)

Can't Pin Me Down

Chapter Notes

Trigger warning for implied rape/noncon (nothing happens, it's just implied through a backstory)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*Do you think I'm stuck-up
'Cause I'm always picking fights
You might think I'm one thing,
But I am another
You ain't got me sussed yet
You're not even close
Baby, it's the one thing
That I hate the most
All these contradictions pouring out of me
Just another girl in the 19th century*

The first thing Peter felt when he woke up was warmth, and he snuggled closer to that warmth with a happy little sigh. He was displeased when the warmth gently pushed him back, and Peter's eyes fluttered open, startled. The moment his eyelids opened, though, he pressed them closed again with a soft groan and curled into himself.

"Here you go," Loki's voice was kind, and Peter accepted his help as he sat up in bed. He then sipped at the hot drink pressed to his lips as Loki chuckled softly. "You had quite a time last night, didn't you?"

"My head hurts," Peter complained quietly. "But this is nice, thank you."

"Of course. I know very well what it is like to wake up the morning after such... festivities," Loki chuckled softly again, though Peter could swear that this time the chuckle was a little darker. And then, when Loki spoke again, Peter flinched slightly. "Did you have a good time? Was it worth it?"

"I... I don't remember what you mean?" Peter mumbled, blinking his eyes open again. He could tell it was morning, but all the drapes had been pulled shut so that the room was cast into shadows. Loki had a small light on beside the bed, and his book was set aside so that he could help Peter drink. Absently, Peter realized he recognized the book. It was 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea.

"Of course you don't," Loki muttered, his voice soft and just a bit grating. "But it doesn't matter now, does it? There, this helping? Good. I came up with this concoction for my brother some years

ago. It always helps him too, especially when father is, was, uh... When father needed Thor to be in one piece the morning after Thor went out with his friends.”

“We’re at Stark Manor,” Peter whispered, suddenly remembering. “You’ve been disinherited. Your father is ill.”

“Yes, thank you for the reminder,” Loki let out a sharp sigh. “I’m going to have a talk with Tony today. I was... out of sorts yesterday, I know I was. I don’t excuse his actions, and if he was only a little more reasonable I don’t think I would have gotten out of sorts. But anyway, alphas do seem to need placating even when we don’t mean it, so this morning I will go placate him, or I’ll try. I’ll talk with him anyway.”

“I’m sorry,” Peter murmured suddenly, eyes flickering up to Loki’s face, which suddenly seemed a bit confused. Loki’s eyebrows drew together and he frowned lightly.

“For what?” Loki murmured.

“For everything.”

There was a long pause after that, and Loki swallowed very hard before he dipped his head in a shallow nod, biting his lips together into a thin line.

“You had a good time with Tony yesterday, didn’t you?” Loki finally asked. “You’re free now, of course, so you can do as you like. Tony doesn’t even have to marry me to get at you.”

“I don’t care about Tony,” Peter interrupted suddenly, his eyes flashing. “I don’t love him, yesterday meant nothing like that. But I was concerned that he might throw us from the house. You were so sharp with him, and I... I thought I could make him like us a little better!”

“Truly?” Loki blinked. “Are you certain those were your intentions?”

“Of course,” Peter nodded, though the hesitation in his voice was nearly palpable. “But that doesn’t mean I will stop speaking with him either. He... he treats me as an equal, and allows us to have the most fascinating conversations about technology and... and science! But doesn’t mean I want to marry him, and it certainly doesn’t mean I love him. I thought it was fairly well established that I stayed with you because... because of you, not because of Tony.”

“I see,” Loki murmured. He still appeared suspicious, but he moved on, laying the topic aside. “You’ve slept in past breakfast so I brought you some food. Here, eat your fill. Is it alright if I go for now, though? I’d like to speak with Tony because he gets caught up in his workshop, then he will never speak with me.”

“Alright, thank you,” Peter murmured. “But wait, are you alright? Yesterday was... a lot happened. Are you alright, Loki? I’m sorry, I know I’ve probably ruined everything for you. I’m sorry.”

“No,” Loki murmured, his hand on the door knob. “You changed everything, but you’ve ruined nothing. Enjoy your breakfast.”

Peter chewed his lip as Loki slipped out, and then he began to eat the strawberry porridge.

Even in the manor the morning smelled fresh, and the cool breeze blowing through the hall was incredibly refreshing. Loki simply stood and enjoyed it for a long moment, his eyes closed, however a soft creak at the end of the hall startled him into awareness.

“Morning,” the omega three doors down murmured, shutting the door softly behind himself.

“Good morning, Bucky,” Loki replied. “Sleep well? Sleep at all?”

Bucky’s jaw tightened and his nostrils flared slightly, however he didn’t take the bait. Instead he smiled slightly and walked up to Loki, startling him when he clasped his shoulder.

“And here, for a moment, I thought you’d changed,” Bucky chuckled. “Is this whole thing with Peter simply an act, or are you simply so far above us that your scandals do not make you one of us?”

“It isn’t a scandal if I refuse to acknowledge it as one,” Loki snapped.

“Ah,” Bucky hummed softly. “And so you do not think it scandalous, you sharing a bed with your omega?”

“He is not my omega,” Loki snapped. “I melted his collar. I set him free.”

“You what?” Bucky’s jaw dropped. “You... Loki, you gave him his freedom?”

“Yes,” Loki growled. “I did. Otherwise I would not share a bed with him. I don’t know what you think I am, but I’m certainly not someone who believes in coercion.”

“So he came here with you willingly?” Buck blinked. “You truly gave your omega his freedom?”

“Did you not hear me the first time?” Loki glowered. “Yes, I did. I’m sorry it is so shocking to you.”

“I suppose not, but then it is still a bit surprising. At first I believed you to be someone who secretly believed in omega rights and could not because of your father, but then you came here and still scowled at our group. I cannot figure you out, Loki.”

“Good,” Loki replied. “Now, am I excused?”

“We are going to London in a few days to see that play Tony told you about. I heard you enjoy theater, would you like to come? It is a rendition of Romeo and Juliet, but Romeo is played by an omega and Juliet by an alpha. I thought you might enjoy it,” Bucky murmured. “There will be a wonderful after party.”

“Perhaps,” Loki replied. “I won’t say no.”

“Good, then we’ll expect you. Have a good day,” Bucky chuckled. He began to head down the hall, but Loki’s hand snapped out and caught Bucky’s arm.

“I wasn’t thrown from the house on account of Peter, at least not entirely,” Loki told Bucky. “I wanted you to know that. I will not say that I am not an ally to your cause, but your entire group has me pegged incorrectly if they believe me to be some kind of icon due to the relationship with Peter you might think that I have.”

“Really? Then why were you sent from the manor?” Bucky’s eyes drew together. “And how did Peter get that injury?”

“It was from Odin, but there is more to the story. You of all people know we must look beyond first appearances.”

“Hm, indeed,” Bucky murmured. “I understand. Don’t worry, I’ll do my best to keep the group

under control. I'm sorry if we assumed wrong."

"Thank you," Loki murmured, letting Bucky go. "Have a good day."

"You as well," Bucky nodded, before turning and making his way down the hall. Loki watched him go before he turned and moved towards Tony's room. It was the last door on the right, just as it always had been, ever since he was a child. At first Loki found it odd that Tony should never move out of his childhood bedroom and into the Master Bedroom that used to belong to his parents. Now, though, Loki had a strange understanding about the action which ached in his stomach. It was this understanding that pushed him forward. His three knocks on the door held a sense of finality, and the omega closed his eyes tightly as he waited for Tony's reply. It took several moments, but Tony's groggy voice called out, and then Loki let himself in.

The alpha looked incredibly small, covered up to his hips in crisp white blankets. He rubbed the sleep from his eyes, and he pushed his hair this way and that for a moment before he realized who had just come in. After the realization hit, Tony's jaw dropped and he quickly pulled the sheets up further.

"Hello Tony," Loki murmured, moving to sit at the bedside. "Are you alright this morning? I brought you some coffee, and by the looks of it you need it. How many fingers am I holding up?"

"Uh, just the middle one! Am I right?" Tony chuckled, accepting the cup and humming softly as coffee bubbled down his throat.

"Cute," Loki sneered lightly. "Anyway, I'm here to acknowledge that I may have seemed unappreciative of your invitation into your manor."

"If that was supposed to be an apology it was the weakest one I've ever heard. Then again, neither of us are the best at apologies so I might be rusty at recognizing one."

"I don't feel I have any reason to apologize," Loki sniffed. "And I suppose you don't think you do either?"

"Nope!" Tony grinned.

"Good, so then we're even," Loki nodded. "Move over. I always thought your bed was more comfortable than mine and I'd like to see if that is still true."

"I'm sure it is," Tony chuckled. "I only have the best."

Loki rolled his eyes as he slipped into bed beside the alpha and there was hardly a moment's hesitation before Tony moved closer, settling so that their biceps brushed against each other. Initially they sat in silence, the only sound being that of Tony sipping his coffee, however eventually Tony seemed unable to handle the quiet and he cleared his throat.

"It's been a long time," Tony murmured. "Since we sat together like this... Do you remember when we used to have our little outings? Do you remember when Thor pitched a tent for us by the river and he went out to catch fish while you and I kept each other company in the tent?"

"I remember it like yesterday," Loki nodded.

"And remember the times you slept over at my manor with your brother in the summer?" Tony went on. "We didn't want you there at first, remember? And you'd have these awful nightmares, and your brother was such a heavy sleeper that you'd come to me, remember? You were so little, and I couldn't understand why you'd have such night terrors. But I used to hold you and tell you

everything would be alright, and we'd fall asleep together here. Do you remember that?"

"I remember everything," Loki whispered. "I've never forgotten."

"I'm so sorry," Tony sighed, setting the cup aside and squeezing at the bridge of his nose. "About your father. And I'm sorry I did not act earlier. I should have realized you were lying about your relationship with Peter."

"I was not lying," Loki sighed, moving so that Tony would have to meet his gaze. "Tony, so much has happened and I should have explained it last night. I was foolish not to do so. Peter and I only became involved after I gave him his freedom. Perhaps you noticed both our collars are missing? I melted his, and after that he chose to stay with me. It was not for that reason that I was disinherited, though."

"Oh?" Tony blinked.

"No. Tony, did you ever meet my father?"

"The medicine man from the village? No, I was only a baby when he died. I've heard stories, though."

"He wasn't truly my father," Loki's voice was just above a whisper. He pressed his eyes shut and took a deep breath before he admitted, "Odin was my father. He had an affair with my mother, the serving omega, and once her husband died she came to Odin for money. I... I heard a rumor he might have killed her, but someone else said she may have just gotten sick. Whatever the truth of my mother's death, one thing is certain. Odin sired me, and he then lied to me all of my life. He refused to acknowledge that he had a child with a serving omega, he refused to acknowledge me. I confronted him, and he then sent me from the home."

"Loki," Tony murmured, his jaw dropping. "Surely that can't be true? That cannot be true."

"It is true," Loki pressed his eyes shut. "He admitted so himself, as did my mother, Frigga. All these years, Tony, for all these years he has lied. He lied to me. He spoke ill of me to the whole county. He never told a soul that I am truly of Odin blood. I have always been the outcast, the adopted son, the peasant given a charmed life out of the goodness of his heart. He had always held it over me, that I was only permitted to stay in the manor because he is a kind man who takes pity on the orphans of peasants. And now to know this truth! To know everything was a lie, that I am a lie, that he never took me in for goodness but instead to cover the wrong he committed!"

"Did Thor know?" Tony murmured.

"No, I don't think so," Loki shook his head. "I don't believe he did."

"Even so, I am so sorry," Tony whispered. "All these years we believed that... that your father..."

"We were wrong," Loki spat bitterly. "I thought for so many years that perhaps I had some luck in my life, that perhaps I could rejoice that at least my father was not so awful as all that, but now... What honor is there in holding a title if you have been lied to about it your whole life? But then, of course, my title has been revoked anyway, so I suppose there is no use in wishing. There is no use in anything."

"Loki," Tony interrupted. He reached to touch Loki's face, and the omega let him, swallowing hard and raising his chin proudly as he met the alpha's eyes. "You know you've always been more than a title. You told me, all through my growing up, that my father was wrong. And now it's my chance to return the favor. If your father thinks you unworthy of your title, then he is the one who

should lose his place in your family manor.”

“And who are you to know?” Loki shot back, crossing his arms. “You’ve never understood the workings of Stark Manor.”

“You know father told me time and again that I would never understand the workings of nobility,” Tony sighed. “He told me time and again that if he had a choice he would pass on Stark Manor to a different heir. But mother died before father ever managed to have another child, and what omega would have ever wanted him after that? So here I am, with a manor and a fortune and not the slightest idea of what to do with it. So you’re right, I don’t understand. But if my opinion means so little to you then why do you still come to me when you’re afraid? I know you’re afraid, even now. You always tremble when you are.”

Loki swallowed had looked down at his trembling hands held still in Tony’s, and he sighed softly, pulling his knees to his chest.

“And you always drank when you were nervous or upset,” Loki replied. “And you’ve been doing that a lot lately, haven’t you?”

“I’m fine,” Tony frowned.

“Then so am I,” Loki replied. “Or at least that’s what we tell ourselves, isn’t it? We tell ourselves that every day. We are fine, we need nothing, and then we dissolve when the lights turn off at night and the ever watching eyes turn away for just a short while. We are both fine, until we are not.”

“I’ve missed you, Loki,” Tony murmured, letting his hand drop from Loki’s cheek. “I never understood what went wrong, but then I suppose the answer has been right in front of me all this time and I’ve been too blind to see it.”

“Has it?” Loki asked skeptically. “I don’t think it has, and I think you still do not understand. You believe that I love omegas, do you not?”

“Well... don’t you?” Tony’s eyebrows furrowed, and Loki sighed deeply.

“I care for Peter, it is true,” Loki sighed. “Anyway, it doesn’t matter, truly. You also love him, don’t you?”

“Does it matter?” Tony shrugged. “I don’t take what doesn’t belong to me.”

“Peter belongs to nobody,” Loki growled softly. “He isn’t an object to be owned.”

“Of course not! You know that’s not what I meant,” Tony frowned.

Loki made a noncommittal noise and shifted in bed, getting more comfortable beside Tony. When the alpha let his eyebrows raise, Loki chuckled softly and accepted the alpha into his arms, even daring to press a kiss to the top of his head.

“So,” Tony murmured a moment later. “Is the wedding truly off?”

“Isn’t that what you want?” Loki asked. “You only ever chose to marry me to save me from the streets, isn’t that right? Don’t I recall something about you telling me Pepper insisted we get married?”

“Perhaps at first it was Pepper’s idea,” Tony admitted. “But I suppose now I’ve sort of... become

accustomed to it. No, more than that, I... Loki, I miss what we used to have. I miss our talks. I miss all of it. And right now it almost feels like we could have that again.”

“You don’t need me to get at Peter,” Loki pointed out.

“So?” Tony shrugged. “Do you really think I’m limited to one omega at a time? Unless, of course, you have complaints?”

“We never took a wedding toast together,” Loki pointed out.

“Ah, activity number one, right after I get dressed,” Tony declared. “Yes? After all, there is nothing better than drinking before noon.”

“You really are worse than Thor,” Loki chuckled, gently shoving the alpha.

“Hey! Do not accuse me of being worse than your brother! The shame!”

“Shut up,” Loki laughed. “You’re awful, you know that?”

“The worst,” Tony agreed. “So, what about it, will you still marry me?”

“And Peter?”

“I’m not certain I can marry both of you but I’ll check the bylaws,” Tony grinned, laughing when Loki glared at him. “He is much smarter than you, you know? And he’s awful cute.”

“Hey,” Loki pushed Tony again, a bit more serious this time. “I don’t mind if you two... spend time together, but... But what I don’t understand is why you still want to marry me?”

“Well I’ve never been very good at taking Rhodey’s advice,” Tony grinned. “And anyway I’ve been told I’d better settle down or I never will.”

“How is Pepper these days?” Loki asked suddenly. “You talk to her last night or something?”

“No, she’s still in London running the factory,” Tony shook his head. “The press people have almost stopped writing gossip! Can you believe it? Even the scandal of an omega running a company gets old eventually.”

“Why was she spared of your affections?” Loki asked, lazily beginning to comb a hand through Tony’s hair.

“Can you really imagine Pepper marrying anything but her work?” Tony chuckled. “I learned that after the second slap and then I promoted her.”

“Wise thinking,” Loki chuckled. “I knew you could be trained.”

“Only when I’ve got someone decent to do it,” Tony grinned, laughing when Loki pushed the alpha off his lap.

“So you’re serious?” Loki asked a moment later, biting his lip. “You still wish to marry me? Even when I have lost my title? Even when Peter is no longer mine?”

“I’ve never been good at knowing what I want,” Tony pointed out. “But I see no reason to call off the wedding, you know? Think of how scandalized Odin will be when his shocking omega son still manages to wed Alpha Lord Stark, hm?”

“But what of your affairs?” Loki murmured. “And truly, what of Peter?”

“I don’t have any affairs at the moment,” Tony declared. “Didn’t you see that Polly took off? And as for Peter, well I think you’ll need to be the one to speak with him. Anyway, if we were to marry, I’d want to know one thing. Who will be in your bed on the wedding night, me or Peter?”

“Wait,” Loki held up a hand, studying Tony closely. “Why do you even suggest this? I don’t understand.”

“Well, neither of us are proper nobles, right?”

“I suppose,” Loki spoke slowly.

“And you love omegas, yes? Or sorry, you care for Peter. Well, with me as your alpha you will be untouchable. No one will be able to take you away. You will never be subjected to... Well, you know. You’ll be safe, safe to do whatever you please.”

“I see,” Loki’s gaze slowly become cold, and a small frown began to grow on his face. “Always the hero. Always the noble alpha prepared to save the gentle, weak omegas. Is that it? No, you don’t need to deny it. Not once this morning have you said a word that would make me think otherwise, you know that? You’ll marry me why? To protect me. To protect me and Peter from one of those places, because of course we cannot protect ourselves.”

“You’ll be safe here at Stark Manor,” Tony reassured him, but Loki’s jaw tightened.

“Why, because you and I will be married? Does that somehow make me safer? Am I not safe if I am not married? What, you’ll call someone in to take us away? Why would we not be safe here if I was not married to you? How does that change anything?”

“Well I suppose it doesn’t but...”

“But what?” Loki snapped. “Nothing has changed, nothing at all. You still only want to marry me because it somehow serves your sense of righteousness. As if our marriage would serve to make you some sort of hero, saving the poor destitute omega cast out from his father’s home.”

“Loki, what else do you want from me?” Tony suddenly cried, wincing slightly and moving to hold his head. “You come here, into my bed, agree to marry me, but for what reason? You’re courting an omega? Why else would you even have to want to marry me? You clearly do not love alphas!”

“Oh, that’s so clear, is it?” Loki snapped. “No matter to the dozens of alphas who have come into my chambers during the parties my father used to throw?”

“Did they mean anything? Anything more than the dozens of omegas in my chambers?”

“No, they didn’t, but that changes nothing,” Loki growled. “You are truly so blind, aren’t you?”

“Blind to what? I don’t understand!”

“Nothing, never mind, it doesn’t matter,” Loki snapped. “Look, if it makes you so happy I will marry you, alright? There. Is that all you want to hear? That you get to marry an indecent omega as if that will somehow make you a decent alpha? Or no! I know exactly what this is! Oh, you are clever, aren’t you? Not an indecent omega, no, a radical one. Oh you are such a clever boy. You are so desperate to appear radical to the world, to appear as if you support some new world order, and bringing such a radical omega into your life will only solidify that, won’t it? I have such a handy story. In love with an omega servant who I sent free, leaving my nobility and my home for a

forbidden romance. Oh it is deliciously convenient to your cause.”

“That isn’t true at all!” Tony cried helplessly. “It isn’t, I swear to you.”

“Isn’t it?”

“No,” Tony repeated firmly. “It is not true. That wasn’t on my mind in the least. You are my oldest and dearest friend, Loki. I once thought we could even be more than that, but perhaps I was wrong. In any case, I... I want to settle down.”

“So why don’t you settle down with Peter?” Loki demanded sharply. “That’s what he’s always wanted, after all, to marry a rich alpha just like you.”

“I hardly know Peter well enough to make such a judgement,” Tony swallowed hard. He opened his mouth to say more, but a knock at his door had both of them jumping, and Loki leapt out of bed as Tony pulled his covers up just before Jarvis came in. The Butler hardly seemed to notice Loki glaring from the corner, and instead he simply turned to Tony with a soft sigh.

“Sir,” he declared. “I suggest you get dressed. Lord Gast is here to see you? He says it’s urgent.”

“Him?” Tony’s jaw dropped. “What does he want? Oh alright, tell him I’ll be down in a moment.”

“It’s because I’m here,” Loki looked up, pale. “That’s why he’s here, I’m sure.”

“Whatever the reason, I’ll talk to him and then tell him to get out,” Tony sighed, standing and pulling on trousers. “You coming?”

“Oh... what the hell, sure,” Loki swallowed hard and Tony grinned, tucking his shirt in.

“That’s the spirit,” he grinned, patting Loki’s arm and then leading the way down the stairs.

Loki and Tony found Lord Gast downstairs, two pretty omegas simpering on his arms. The moment he spotted Tony, he left them to dash forward and kiss both of Tony’s cheeks.

“My friend!” The alpha beamed. “How fare thee?”

“I’ll fare better after breakfast,” Tony snapped. “What are you doing out of bed before noon?”

“You wound me!” Lord Gast gasped. “Doesn’t he, my dear? What a suggestion, that I sleep in past the sunrise. Ah, there he is! Lo-Lo, dear! You have finally escaped your father’s confines!”

Lord Gast dashed forward, pulling Loki into his arms, but the omega seemed to nearly panic and he pushed the alpha away before the arms around his waist could get any tighter.

“Good sir!” Loki snapped, fixing his shirt. “What sort of greeting is this?”

“The greeting fitting for a creature as noble as yourself!” The alpha cried, throwing his arms open. “It is so good to see you here, free at last! Why, with all your freedom, have you not come running to me? And I thought you could not wait to join my side! Lo-Lo, darling, how I have missed you in my arms!”

“Stop it!” Loki cried out before Tony had the chance to intervene. Again the omega had to work out of the alpha’s arms, pushing away his exploring hands and glaring harshly at the alpha. “Have you no shame? Whatever belief you may have for some... affection I might have had in the past, surely you can tell that it is gone now!”

“Gone?” Lord Gast blinked.

“Yes!” Loki snapped, moving to Tony’s side. “Don’t you know I am engaged to Lord Stark? We will be wed before the end of the summer, won’t we Tony?”

Tony blinked twice, looking between Lord Gast and Loki before he finally ducked his head in a slow nod.

“Indeed,” Tony declared stiffly. “So... so keep your hands off my omega, you hear me?”

Loki glared and subtly stomped on Tony’s foot.

“Indeed,” Loki spat. “So unless you have some actual business here I think it’s best you be on your way.”

“But I thought-“

“You thought wrong if you thought at all,” Loki snapped. “Do you have any business, or not?”

“Well...” Lord Gast looked between Loki and Tony, before he finally shook his head. “I... I suppose not.”

“Good,” Loki glared. “Then good day.”

“But Lo-Lo...”

“I said good day!” Loki snapped.

Lord Gast blinked, clearly shocked, yet he slowly nodded and held out his arms, the two omegas scampering forward to take them.

“If you change your mind my door is always open to you,” the alpha murmured.

“I’m sure I won’t need it,” Loki replied. “Good day.”

And so, with one last look back at the omega, Lord Gast filed out, the omegas on his arms oddly quiet. Loki was stiff until the door shut, and then he collapsed, practically boneless, onto the steps.

“Loki?” Tony murmured, moving to sit beside him, and Loki accepted the arm around his shoulders.

“So,” Loki murmured. “That marriage still on?”

“If you want it,” Tony smiled weakly. “Shall we make a toast?”

“Yes please,” Loki agreed. “I desperately need a drink.”

“Drinking before breakfast? You’re worse than your brother!”

“Shut up, Tony,” Loki couldn’t hold back a chuckle.

So the two found themselves out on in the sun room sipping bourbon and laughing about old times despite themselves. Tony’s head was settled in Loki’s lap, and the omega had his arms wrapped around the alpha’s torso, a casual but comforting embrace. Peter spotted them but let them be, instead moving into the kitchen to make himself some lunch. He found Steve and Bucky there working on some sort of French dish, so he joined them and couldn’t help but smile at the kindness

of their relationship. There was something refreshing about it, and Peter oddly found himself wishing that Loki was with him, but he pushed the thought away.

“And there you have it!” Steve declared once the dish was done. “And now to see if it tastes half as good as it smells.”

“I’m sure it will be incredible,” Bucky chuckled. “After all, you had a hand in it. You know if I tried on my own we’d end up with the house on fire.”

“And that is why I am the cook,” Steve replied, grinning. “I’ll fetch the dishes. Who wants juice? I think I’ll grab a fruit from outside! We can make some fresh juice and then dig in!”

“Thanks love,” Bucky nodded. “I’ll keep this warm. Hey Peter, want to sneak a bite before he gets back?”

“We shouldn’t!” Peter giggled, but snuck one just the same. It was delicious, and Peter hummed softly.

“So he does the cooking?” Peter asked.

“Yup, always has. He knows better than to let me take over. I can make grand plans all day but I can’t cook a pie to save my life,” Bucky chuckled.

“You two seem really happy,” Peter declared a moment later. “I wish I had an alpha like Steve... how did you two meet?”

“How did we meet?” Bucky raised his eyebrows. “Or how did we end up married? Those are two very different stories. Steve and I have known each other since we were children. We grew up in Brooklyn, you see. He lived on the floor below mine in our housing complex. It wasn’t a grand life, but it was a good one. Our families had little money, but we got along alright. He and I ran through the streets for fun, playing by the railroad and snagging food from the fancier, rich stands downtown. It was a simple life, until suddenly Steve’s father got very lucky. See, he owned a little restaurant below our building, and one day this food critic came by and wrote a splendid review, and then suddenly his family grew famous overnight. They opened up a larger, nicer restaurant in Manhattan that was visited by none other than Lord Howard Stark. Howard and Steve’s father became good friends and soon Steve was shipped off to attend school at some fancy boarding school... anyway, that was a long explanation to say we’ve known each other since childhood.”

“And how did you get married?” Peter asked, nabbing a little more food.

“Well,” Bucky sighed. “That isn’t necessarily a happy story. Are you certain you want to hear it?”

“Why isn’t it happy?” Peter frowned. “You both seem happy.”

“Because we are,” Bucky agreed. “But it’s because we are finally safe and together. I will tell you, if you want, but I don’t want to frighten you. There is a reason why I am so adamant about omega rights. I’ve been through hell and back again and I am not going to allow others to experience the same horrors I did.”

“What happened?” Peter murmured, joining Bucky as he sat at the kitchen table.

“It wasn’t until after Steve left that I presented,” Bucky murmured. “And when I did my family was immediately concerned. Omegas in America are not bought and sold to lords and ladies, but it is rife with the black market. I stayed near my family’s home best I could, but I was a kid and I wanted to explore same as when Steve was home. One day I... I went exploring and never

returned. Steve came home that summer to discover I was missing, and though he looked for clues it was like I had gone into thin air. And so he returned each summer from school, and never found me. Eventually he joined the army and made even more connections, and that's when I ran into Major Schmidt. Steve says the man was suspicious from the moment he met him, but it wasn't until the alpha offered to hook Steve up with an omega that he became truly worried.

"Still, apparently Steve followed a hunch and pretended to be interested, and that's how he discovered Hydra. It's a huge black market operation spanning the entire eastern seaboard, and slowly moving to the west. Shockingly, Major Schmidt was the head man himself, and by growing close to him, Steve was able to learn much about their inner workings. He says he was curious about Schmidt's own omega, as Steve had never met him, and so one day, finally, Schmidt consented to allowing Steve to visit his home. It was a huge place, up on a hill in upstate New York. It was every bit as grand as one of these English Manors. Steve pretended to be impressed, and he went in expecting the inside to be as nice as the out. Initially it was, and then after Steve made some lascivious comments, he was taken upstairs to a grand bedroom which held Schmidt's pride and joy: me."

For a moment, Bucky pressed his eyes closed, and Peter startled when he saw the other omega trembling slightly, silent tears trailing down his cheeks. Peter was quick to reach over and wipe at them, but Bucky stopped him, shaking his head and forcing a light smile.

"I'm alright," Bucky promised. "Thank you. Yes I... I had been with him since I was a teen. I fought at first, actually I never stopped fighting, but that's why he liked me so much. When he got sick of me, though, or when company came over it was easy to leave me there, tied down in his bed and that's where Steve found me. I'm sorry, I've told this story before and each time it is no easier. Anyway, for only a moment I was terrified that Steve had changed, that he was just like every other alpha Schmidt brought in to... But he winked. Steve winked and then I knew. I knew I was saved. We pretended to not know each other, and he did as he had to to please Schmidt, but that night he left and in the morning Schmidt was behind bars and I... I saw the sun again. I finally saw the sun... And from that moment on I swore that I would never stop fighting. I will never stop fighting for omegas to be free of such treatment. I don't care what they do to me. I've already been through hell and there is nothing they can do to me that hasn't already been done. I will never stop fighting. And knowing that Steve is by my side through all of it only makes it all the better."

"You're so strong," Peter whispered, swallowing hard. "I don't know if I could have survived that."

"You could have," Bucky decided. "We all can, but we shouldn't have to. And that's why I fight."

"I'll join your cause, your group," Peter suddenly decided. "If you'll take another member."

"We always welcome anyone who wishes to join," Bucky promised. "Thank you, Peter. Ah, Steve, you're back!"

"And I've got juice!" Steve grinned. "Are you... everything alright?"

"Yes, thank you," Bucky smiled, pressing a kiss to Steve's cheek. "Now, it's time for your delicious lunch."

"Only if I get some!"

"Ah, hello Nat," Steve chuckled, grinning at her. "Yes, of course you're invited."

"Good, because unlike some alphas I do not feel like cooking," Natasha chuckled softly grinning at

Peter. “Hey there.”

“Hi,” Peter blushed, looking down. “Good morning.”

“Morning,” Natasha chuckled, slipping into the chair beside him. “Heard you’re coming to see the play? It’s a good one, I should know. I helped direct it.”

“Really?” Peter blinked.

“Yup,” Natasha grinned. “In my free time. Next month we’re going to be showing Macbeth so I’ve had to get my lines memorized for that one.”

“Who do you play?” Peter blinked, biting his lips when she chuckled softly at him.

“Why, Macbeth of course,” Natasha grinned. “I’ve been practicing my Scottish accent. Steve, this really is delicious. If you weren’t busy with the army I’d employ you as our caterer.”

“I live to serve,” Steve chuckled, and Peter settled in for a long and delicious meal.

Chapter End Notes

So, what do you think of Bucky’s backstory? And what about the changing dynamics in the Loki/Tony relationship? They have a lot of history which I’ll be very slowly filtering out through the story. I hoped to show a small bit of their relationships dynamic here. Those two have a long road ahead of them...

Thanks again to lokislonleyleady for giving me feedback! I look forward to your comments, and a big thank you to those regular commenters out there, you know who you are :-)

Radioactive

Chapter Notes

(Warning: slight slut shaming present in this chapter)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Lying on a fake beach you'll never get a tan

Baby I'm gonna leave you drowning until you reach for my hand

I'm turning radioactive, my blood is radioactive

My heart is nuclear

Love is all that I fear

Ready to be let down

Now I'm heading for a meltdown

Peter spent his first afternoon in the library with Steve, Bucky, Natasha, and a book of philosophy. Truthfully, Natasha frightened Peter just a bit, but Peter still found himself feeling more at home here than he ever had at Odin Manor. Their conversation was complex and occasionally went over Peter's head, but Steve was always kind about explaining any foreign concepts. Once Peter went again to check on Loki, however he and Tony had locked themselves in the sunroom so Peter left them undisturbed for the whole of the afternoon. Soon dinner rolled around and everyone gathered in the large dining room for Jarvis' incredible cooking served along with bottomless glasses of red wine. It was clear to Peter that both Loki and Tony had enjoyed more than their share of alcohol through the day, though initially the group kept quiet on that subject. Still, Peter's jaw nearly dropped when he spotted Loki and Tony chuckling softly to one another over a shared glass of wine.

"Looks like you two are getting along," Bucky pointed out, swirling his own glass with slow, even movements.

"Ah, yes, right, we have an announcement to make!" Tony hiccuped, raising his glass and looping one arm over Loki's shoulders. "We are, officially, getting married!"

"Indeed," Loki purred, winking at the group.

"Oh," Steve blinked, glancing around in surprise. "Still?"

"Of course," Loki leaned closer, apparently unconcerned when the alpha's nose wrinkled. "Did you have any doubts? We've always been engaged."

"Drinks for everyone!" Tony declared joyfully. "Come on, now, who wants some more!"

"Tony," Bruce chuckled, glancing around apologetically at the group. "Perhaps you should be getting to bed."

“Nonsense!” Loki grinned. “Why? Don’t you all stay up half the night!”

“It isn’t even seven o’clock yet!” Tony whined. “You’re such a spoilsport, isn’t he love? He is such a spoilsport.”

Tony fumbled for his glass, however Bruce snatched it away with another soft chuckle before hissing, “Do you want me to call the colonel? Because I will.”

“He’s a spoilsport too,” Tony whispered to Loki before the two of them both burst into giggles. The rest of the group eyed each other warily, and Natasha’s eyes narrowed on the omega.

“Loki,” she hissed softly. “What did you slip in his drink.”

“I didn’t slip anything of the kind,” Loki replied said aghast by the very idea. He hesitated for a moment, though, before adding, “Except love potion!”

He and Tony both burst into giggles again, though something about Loki (maybe it was his expression, or just his tone of voice) made the hair on the back of Peter’s neck stand on end just a bit. There was something in his eyes, something sharp, that gave Peter pause. Tony didn’t seem to share any of the reservations the rest of the group was clearly displaying, and he pulled away from Bruce in order to pour himself another glass. He was about to toss it down his throat, when Loki snatched it first and drank it himself.

“Hey!” Tony complained, glaring at the omega.

“I need it more,” Loki sniffed. “I have to put up with you.”

“Yeah? Well then I need five more drinks,” Tony boasted.

“I need fifteen,” Loki replied.

“Twenty,” Tony countered.

“I was lying,” Loki whispered just loud enough that everyone at the table could hear him. “I just need you.”

Peter’s nose wrinkled slightly when a grin spread across Tony’s face and he pulled the omega in for a deep kiss. Everyone else at the table seemed to share Peter’s displeasure, and they also all seemed equally shocked by this turn of events. Tony’s hand shot out to grab his glass, but Bruce was quick to snatch it away, his frown more serious this time.

“Tony,” Bruce murmured, casting a quick glance around the table. “As your doctor I have to tell you no, no more.”

“Oh, alright,” Tony sighed deeply, rolling his eyes. “Fine, no more... from down here! Now, darling, know where there’s some more?”

“No, but I bet you could show me!” Loki laughed, patting Tony’s chest and allowing his hand to rest there for just a moment more than Peter was comfortable with.

“Tony,” Steve interrupted, standing when the other alpha stood. The two shared a long, hard look, a slight glare set into the captain’s features. Bucky, too, appeared concerned, and he also stood and wrapped an arm around Steve’s waist.

“What?” Tony snapped. “You going to be mean? Gonna be a spoilsport!”

“He’s always a spoilsport,” Loki whispered loudly again, pressing another kiss to Tony’s cheek and wrapping both his arms around Tony’s right forearm.

“Tony,” Steve spoke again, his gaze set hard in place. “I think you and Loki should both go to bed.”

“Oh we will, don’t worry,” Loki grinned.

“Separately,” Steve ground out.

“Jealous?” Tony laughed.

“Hardly,” the captain replied, gently squeezing Bucky’s hand. “Just thinking more than you are at the moment. Stop and consider what you’re doing. Loki, didn’t you come here to be with Peter? Tony, are you certain this is what you want?”

“Oh, yes Peter, do you want to join us? It’ll be so much fun!” Tony clapped his hands.

“No,” Loki’s voice was suddenly firm. “No, unless... unless he wants to?”

“I, uh, I’m okay,” Peter swallowed hard, fiddling with his napkin, his eyes downcast. Loki seemed to study him for a long moment, suddenly completely sober, however Tony’s hand wandered down to slap just below Loki’s waist and the omega jumped, laughing and slapping Tony right back.

“Are you both certain?” Steve insisted again.

“Loki?” Bucky demanded. “Are you certain you’re alright?”

“Stay out of my business,” Loki suddenly hissed at Bucky, his eyes flashing. The moment was incredibly awkward and thick with tension, but then Loki burst into giggles again and Tony followed suit.

“But nothing else to drink,” Bruce insisted. “Promise me, Tony.”

“Cross my heart and hope to die,” Tony pouted. The whole room seemed to buzz with an unpleasant energy that Peter desperately wanted to escape, and though he wasn’t altogether upset by Loki’s decision, he utterly disliked the energy being aimed at his dear friend and lover, and Peter cleared his throat lightly. The noise was sharp, and everyone in the room seemed to jump and blink. That moment was long enough for Tony and Loki to make their escape, leaving the room in a thick, uneasy blanket of silence.

“He did something,” Natasha insisted softly. “Loki knows what he’s doing.”

“He’s a slut, what do you expect?” Clint muttered, sipping his own wine. “Course he knows what he’s doing.”

“There are three things you can always count on,” Sam agreed. “Steve will be a proper gentlemen, Tony will scandalize the gentry, and Loki will bed every member of the gentry until he’s painted himself white.”

“Hey,” Peter suddenly spoke up, glaring at the group despite the anger suddenly sent his way. The glares might have been enough to make some back down, but Peter only straightened his back and cleared his throat. “I don’t like what you’re saying about my friend. You don’t even know him.”

“Friend?” Sam chuckled, rolling his eyes. “I think you’re more than his friend, same as anyone else

he lays eyes on. Same as every other person who's found themselves buried between his--

"Stop it," Peter squared his shoulders. "Stop. No. You don't even know him, so stop judging him. All of you, I thought you were supposed to be standing up for omegas and here you are judging him? Loki is right! You're all hippocrates! I can't believe you people."

"Peter is right," Steve murmured, glaring at the group. "I thought you all knew better. Whether or not we like Loki doesn't matter. That doesn't mean you can talk about him like that."

"Thank you," Bucky murmured to the alpha. "Now, anyone want to say sorry?"

A few odd apologies were tossed out, though Peter knew several glares were aimed his way. Somehow, shockingly, he didn't mind. Rather than shrinking under the alphas' anger, Peter only sat up straighter and forced a proud look upon his face, though the meal tasted like cardboard on his tongue.

Upstairs, Loki giggled softly as Tony swept him off his feet and pressed a long kiss to the omega's neck before tossing him on the bed. Loki bounced there for a moment before growling softly and snatching Tony around the neck, pulling him close so he could nibble at the alpha's bottom lip.

"Don't know how long I've waited for this," Tony purred softly, carefully pushing Loki's hair back.

"Everyone waits for me," Loki whispered, his face cast in shadows.

"Don't want to wait anymore," Tony replied.

"Don't have to," Loki chuckled, pushing his hands into Tony's hair and tugging lightly. Tony gasped softly, tipping his head back so that Loki could nip at his neck and press open mouth kisses lower and lower, Tony's suit and shirt thrown aside. Tony moaned softly, rocking up into Loki's embrace, and the omega purred softly in reply.

That night, as Peter ascended the stairs, he couldn't help but wince slightly as he passed Tony's room. The soft sounds leaking out from under the door made Peter's skin crawl slightly, and he hesitated there by the room for a moment, pressing his eyes shut.

"Hey," a voice startled Peter, and he turned to see Natasha standing behind him. As always, the intensity of her gaze was nearly frightening, but there was also a warmth in her eyes that gave Peter pause as she asked, "You alright?"

"Yeah," Peter murmured. "I'm happy for Loki. I think he's, uh, I think this is something he's wanted for a while. I'm happy for them both."

"You don't have to lie," Natasha whispered.

"I'm not."

"Then you're an incredibly kind person," Natasha smiled, carefully squeezing Peter's shoulder. "You should get some rest."

"Thank you," Peter smiled. "Ms Romanoff?"

"Yes, Peter?" Natasha turned back, raising one eyebrow.

"Thanks for, uh, for apologizing after dinner. I know everyone here doesn't like Loki for some

reason, well I guess I didn't like him at first either, but you have to get to know him. He's actually a lot fun, and very nice, once you give him a chance. He's been through a lot, you know? I just wish... never mind, I don't know. But thanks, okay? For being a nicer alpha."

Natasha simply chuckled softly, smirked, and then nodded once before disappearing down the hall and leaving Peter to slink into his own room and curl up alone.

His head ached in the morning. No, scratch that, all of him ached, and Tony groaned softly, stretching until his arm hit last night's love conquest who grumbled softly in reply.

"Sorry, love," Tony murmured, turning over and preparing to pull whoever it was into his arms, yet Tony's exploring hands met rich, dark hair, which led to a face with rich, dark eyelashes, and immediately Tony paled.

"Morning," Loki purred. "Sleep well?"

"Loki?" Tony whispered, his eyes incredibly wide. Within seconds, Tony shot up in bed, holding his head and trembling slightly. Loki frowned, also sitting up and moving to pull Tony into his arms, yet the alpha flinched away, clearly shocked and slightly horrified.

"What's wrong?" Loki murmured. "Tony, are you alright?"

"I... What have I done?" Tony whispered, glancing back at Loki before pressing his eyes shut. "Oh Lord, what have I done? Oh Loki, love, I'm so sorry, I... I'm so sorry..."

"For what?" Loki frowned. "Tony?"

"I'm so sorry," Tony repeated, slowly blinking his eyes open against the glaring sun. "Loki, I'm so sorry."

"Would you stop apologizing and tell me what's wrong?" Loki demanded, his hands on his hips.

"Last night," Tony stood, pulling a bathrobe on and tying it around his waist. "I had no idea what I was doing. Last night should never have happened. Oh Loki, I am so, incredibly sorry. How did this even happen? God, I need a drink."

Tony stumbled over to his closet and moved to grab some liquor with shaking hands, but Loki was quick to jump out of bed and snatch it away from him, setting it aside even as Tony glared.

"Last night, it's okay. I agreed, love, I agreed to what happened last night," Loki murmured, concern coming into his features. "You don't need to feel guilty. We didn't do anything I didn't agree to."

"Yes, I do need to feel guilty," Tony growled softly in reply. "That never should have happened at all, and if it was going to happen it shouldn't have happened like that. Loki, I am so sorry. And Peter! Oh no, Peter... You've got to apologize to him."

"Why should I have to apologize to Peter?" Loki frowned, flinching when Tony jerked away from him.

"You're right," Tony groaned, holding his hand to his forehead again. "I should be the one apologizing. I... I've got to go and speak to Peter."

"Tony, you don't have to do this," Tony caught his arm, searching the alpha's eyes desperately.

“You don’t have to say sorry.”

“Yes I do,” Tony insisted. “Last night was a mistake, and I never meant for it to happen. And I never meant to come between you and Peter.”

“Come between us?” Loki cried softly. “Tony, I... You’re right, I should apologize to Peter, but you haven’t ruined anything. Don’t you understand?”

“I understand that I’m sorry,” Tony sighed, pulling on pants and slippers. “Now I need to go apologize. And I also apologize to you, Loki. I obviously wasn’t thinking clearly, and I am so sorry. I only hope you can forgive me.”

“So, what, all of last night was a mistake? And that’s all?” Loki spat softly.

“Yes,” Tony sighed, reaching out and squeezing Loki’s hands. “And I’m so incredibly sorry. I only hope you can forgive me.”

“Oh,” Loki spat softly. “Of course, you’re forgiven, my Lord. Now if you’ll excuse me, I wish to bathe. I have some filth I need to clean off of my skin.”

“I understand,” Tony murmured sadly, swallowing hard. “I’ll have Jarvis send you some breakfast.”

“Don’t bother, I don’t need anything more from you,” Loki growled. He glared at Tony for a moment longer before storming off to the bathroom and slamming the door behind himself. Tony gazed after him for a long moment before sighing and going to find Peter.

Tony found the omega downstairs sitting cross legged on the couch while Bruce explained a complicated diagram he’d drawn on the roll around chalkboard. Peter was clearly fascinated, however he looked up in surprise when Tony entered looking altogether disheveled.

“Oh, good morning, Lord Stark,” Peter blinked, a smile of his face as he sipped from an amber colored drink. “You alright? Dr Banner is explaining about electricity! Do you want to join us?”

“Actually I’d like to speak with you, Peter,” Tony murmured, leaning against the door frame. “Can I have some of your drink?”

“I think not,” Bruce shook his head firmly. “But don’t worry, Peter, we can continue some other time.”

“Thank you Bruce!” Peter beamed, hopping up and setting the drink aside so that he could scamper after Tony into his study. He sat when Tony gestured vaguely towards the armchair, and Tony took the one next to him, his head resting in his hands.

“Are you alright, Lord Stark?” Peter murmured, frowning and leaning closer. “Can I get you something?”

“No, I’ve come to apologize,” Tony murmured, finally looking up. “For my behavior last night, and for Loki. I don’t typically apologize for anything, you’re just special.”

“Oh, thanks,” Peter chuckled softly. “But you don’t have to say sorry. It’s okay, I don’t mind what happened.”

“What do you mean?” Tony frowned, his eyebrows pulling together.

“Well, I do care for Loki,” Peter admitted. “In fact I... I think I love him, but I don’t only need

Loki, and I don't think he only needs me. I still have to discuss with him, but I don't want Loki to feel tied down or anything. Don't worry, I don't get jealous. You don't have to feel bad at all, unless Loki is upset. No, it's alright, really. He and I, I think we're both the types to... To be open about such things. You know I grew up believing an omega's self worth is only as good as their alpha, so being tied down to another omega hardly fits with my upbringing anyway, you know?"

"So you're not angry at me?" Tony frowned.

"Not at all!" Peter chuckled softly. "Besides, I don't know how anyone could be mad at anyone who looks quite as bad as you do right now... Do you want me to get you some coffee?"

"I can get my own coffee," Tony mumbled, almost standing before falling back weakly into his chair. Peter simply chuckled and patted Tony on the cheek before hopping up.

"Don't worry, Tony," Peter smiled. "I'll get it for you. You just rest, alright?"

"Yes, you do that," Tony mumbled, eyes beginning to fall closed. Peter simply chuckled before scampering off to make a dark blend. He was nearly done with the coffee when Loki walked in, a towel wrapped around his hair. Peter, smiled and hopped over to press a kiss to Loki's cheek.

"Morning," Peter smiled. "Sleep well?"

"Good morning," Loki spoke slowly, a frown pulling onto his face. "What's got you so happy?"

"What do you mean?" Peter asked, returning to the bubbling brew.

"Well... Aren't you mad at me?" Loki spoke slowly. He hesitated near the door for a moment before he approached the other omega, peering at him curiously.

"Not at all," Peter blinked, turning back to his lover. "Why's everyone think I should be? First Tony and now you. No, don't you know I'm happy for you? Loki, you finally did it! I know how much you love Tony, and now finally you're together! No, I'm really very excited. When is the wedding?"

"I don't know if there will be a wedding," Loki sighed, falling into a kitchen chair. "I'm... honestly shocked by your response, though it's... Very touching. I didn't realize you'd be so... overjoyed that I cheated on you."

"Cheated on me?" Peter laughed. "Hardly. Loki, I've known all along that you loved Tony and though I wasn't particularly happy how drunk you both got last night, I am incredibly happy for you. Besides, is it truly cheating when I see it all happening right in front of me? If I'd been truly upset I would have said something last night. No, I want you to be happy, Loki, and last night you seemed very happy even though you were drunk. I want what's best for you, because I care about you a lot. My own happiness matters, of course, but no more than your happiness. In fact, isn't that part of love? I think to truly love someone is to sometimes put their happiness, their needs, first before your own. Sometimes I think true love is giving a part of yourself and sacrificing something in order to ensure your loved one is in the best place they can be. That's true love. And I only want what's best for you, Loki. So I'm not angry, I'm very happy."

Loki blinked, clearly shocked, and he took several deep breaths as Peter poured a large cup of coffee before stirring in a little sugar and creamer.

"Loki," Peter approached, setting the cup on the table. "Is everything alright? You still look upset."

"He said it was a mistake," Loki murmured, swallowing hard. "He said he didn't mean any of it

last night. He was drunk. It meant nothing.”

“Oh,” Peter breathed, swallowing very hard. “Oh Loki, I’m so sorry... I didn’t realize.”

“It’s alright, you couldn’t have known,” Loki sighed softly. “Please, don’t feel sad for me. I, too, wish for your happiness. Here, can I have a sip of that coffee before it goes to Tony? Thanks, love. You’re very sweet, very kind. I think I’ve said this before, but I’ve never met anyone like you, did you know that Peter? It’s true... I’m so lucky to have you... You’re incredible.”

“Thanks,” Peter blushed. “Hey, you take care of yourself, alright? I’d better get this to Tony, he isn’t looking so well. We’ll talk in a bit, alright?”

“Perhaps,” Loki murmured. “Peter? Thank you, love.”

“You don’t need to say thanks,” Peter chuckled, pressing another kiss to Loki’s cheek and murmuring, “There’s eggs and toast on the counter, they’re for you. Enjoy, okay?”

Loki hummed noncommittingly, watching as Peter dashed out of the room.

Tony’s head was still in his hands, but he began looking a bit better after he got several gulps of coffee in him. After a while, the two of them got to talking about the flying machine again, which led eventually to Tony leading Peter back outside to the invention where Bruce was also fiddling. Bruce gave them a brief update on the engine, and the two alphas began showing Peter the inner workings of the machine. Peter was relieved that the fresh air significantly improved Tony’s color, and his voice grew in exuberance as the morning wore on. Peter even found himself laughing at Tony’s jokes, first giggling and then nearly doubled over when the alpha quipped something particularly funny.

“You’re not too bad, you know that, Peter?” Tony declared around high noon, winking as he added. “For an omega.”

“Oh really?” Peter smirked. “Well I wish I could say the same about you.”

“Hey!” Tony laughed, and Bruce chuckled when the two continued to gently squabble over who got to use the wrench yet. The day was wearing on quite well, however Bruce frowned and held his arm above his eyes when he spotted something through the glare of the sun.

“You two,” Bruce murmured, squinting. “Someone is coming up the path.”

Peter looked up, and then he broke into a beaming smile and dropped the wrench on the grass, dashing forward to pull the beta coming up the drive into a hug.

“Shuri!” Peter beamed, chuckling happily. “I’m so happy you’re here!”

“Hello Peter,” Shuri laughed softly. “Nice to see you too. You look like you’re doing well in exile!”

“It’s all thanks to Tony and Bruce and Bucky,” Peter smiled. “They’ve all been so kind.”

“Bucky, hm?” Shuri frowned, slightly, though she brushed the subject aside and quickly moved on. “Peter, I’m so happy that you’re doing well, but I actually have to speak with Loki. Do you know where he is? I have a message for him. His mother sent me.”

“Oh, yeah he should be right inside,” Peter smiled, hugging her once more before letting her go. “Is everything okay?”

“Oh I suppose so. The Manor is shockingly dull without Loki there to complain all day,” Shuri chuckled. “I’m not certain Thor is handling the whole thing very well. He skipped going hunting after Loki left. His friends are all in a tizzy about it and they’re cussing Loki right and left. He and I still go on rides, though. It’s the only time he’ll leave the manor. His father isn’t doing very well yet and I think Thor is heavily affected. He’s also incredibly angry that his father would banish Loki and lie to the world about his true family. I’m not certain he was supposed to tell me, but Thor isn’t the best at hiding how he is feeling. He nearly ran his poor horse ragged yesterday with his anger, and when I asked him what made him so red in the face he told me that his father is a liar and doesn’t deserve the place at the head of the house, but that since Thor is his heir he has to pretend to support his father, and meanwhile he’s frightened for his father’s health... Poor boy doesn’t know what to do or think. Main thing, though, is that he clearly misses his brother. He wanted to come here today, but Frigga and I convinced him otherwise. We don’t need both sons put into banishment.”

“You should tell Loki all of that,” Peter murmured. “Might help him feel better.”

“Maybe,” Shuri nodded. “Any way I have to go. I’m not even supposed to be here. If either Odin or my brother find out I’ve come here I’ll never hear the end of it. Where’s Bucky so I can avoid him?”

“Hey,” Peter murmured. “Bucky really is very nice. You should take the chance to get to know him.”

“I already know him,” Shuri muttered. “He killed my father, I don’t want anything to do with him.”

“I thought he was never convicted,” Peter frowned. “I thought we didn’t really know.”

“Do you really think they could convict Captain Roger’s omega?” Shuri scoffed. “I have to go. I’m glad you’re doing well, but be careful, okay?”

Peter nodded, watching her go before heading back over to Tony, thoughts spinning through his mind.

Inside, Shuri found Loki curled up in a ball watching Tony, Bruce, and Peter out of a bay window. He was quick to sit up straight when Shuri came in, and he thanked her for the news of his brother.

“You’re mother also sends her love,” Shuri murmured kindly, smiling at Loki. “You have a very good mother. She desperately wished to send you things, but your father’s servants are watching the house like hawks. I’m lucky I could come here on my day off at all. If she were to move anything of yours, they would know and tell your father and...”

“I understand. Tell her to leave my things be,” Loki nodded. “Is she alright?”

“Oh yes,” Shuri smiled. “And she misses you terribly. She anxiously awaits the day that she will see you again. Never doubt, your mother loves you very much and made it very clear that she supports whatever you choices in life may be. She only wants to see you happy.”

“Thank you, Shuri. Speaking of happy...” Loki turned to gaze out the window, sighing softly when Peter laughed at something Tony said, his hand landing on the alpha’s chest.

“Yes, they are nice together, hm?” Shuri hummed softly, gazing out at them. “A sweet couple. I assume your engagement to Tony is off?”

“Unknown,” Loki sighed, turning away from the *sweet couple*. “Everything has been incredibly confusing. I think perhaps it will be, but I simply don’t know. Yesterday we were ready to be

married and now I just don't know. I think Tony does think we'll be married but..."

"Hey," Shuri snapped, calling Loki back to the present. "Whatever happens happens, okay? Your mother and brother love you dearly, you don't need to fear. I should be on my way, I'm not even supposed to be here."

"Thank you for coming," Loki told her. "And Shuri, it may not be possible, but if it is at all possible I have a favor for you. There are some papers in the attic, I want them destroyed. I set Peter free, but the paperwork still exists upstairs and I don't want it falling into the wrong hands. Those papers are the final link to Peter's ownership. I want them burned. I want them destroyed so that no one can acquire them."

"Loki, I would but... Well your father's servants keep a close watch on all of your things. They would notice if anything was out of place. I'm not certain I can."

"Try, please? For Peter."

"I'll try," Shuri nodded. "But I simply don't know, Loki. I'm sorry."

"I understand," Loki nodded. "Thank you very much. You're very kind for coming here."

"You're welcome," Shuri smiled. "My Lord."

Loki smiled weakly despite himself and ducked his head in a shallow incline, smiling sadly as she stood and hurried from the room. He watched as she dashed down the steps to talk briefly with Bruce before going on her way, Tony and Peter still giggling to each other.

In the night, your heart is full

And by the morning, empty

But baby, I'm the one who left you

You're not the one who left me

My heart is nuclear

Love is all that I fear

Chapter End Notes

Poor Loki, he certainly has a rough time of it. So close to Tony here and yet so far! I look forward to your thoughts on his brief romance with Tony and how that turned out... those two certainly don't have an easy time of it :/

I look forward to your thoughts and opinions about this chapter and the current relationships occurring, the love triangle certainly is complicated at the moment...

Beta:Lokislonlylady

Jealousy

Chapter Notes

Thanks again to lokislonleyleady for giving me some ideas about Loki and character interactions...

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

I never say a word

In case I come off needy

I never say a word

Leave you before you leave me

Peter, Loki decided, was perhaps the kindest and sweetest person he'd ever met, and yet that made everything even more difficult for Loki to truly process. That evening, Peter seemed to know something was wrong with his lover and he wouldn't leave Loki alone about it.

"I'm alright," Loki promised Peter, summoning a forced smile. "Don't worry."

"No you're not," Peter insisted. "And I'm really sorry. Did Shuri have bad news? She told me your brother misses you."

"No, no she didn't really have any news that I wasn't already expecting," Loki sighed. "No, you shouldn't worry for me. Shuri's visit was welcome."

"Then what's wrong?" Peter murmured. "Oh, Loki, is this about me spending so much time with Tony?"

"Of course not," Loki sniffed. "You're free and you can do as you like. I don't know why that should upset me."

"I don't know why either, but I can tell it is," Peter murmured. "I'm so sorry about this morning. I wanted your relationship with Tony to work out, really I did."

"I don't care about that," Loki lied. "Last night we were both drunk. It meant nothing."

"You don't have to lie to me," Peter murmured, but Loki shook his head.

"I am not lying," Loki frowned. "I don't truly care for Lord Stark. I'm better off without him."

"Oh Loki..." Peter murmured softly, slipping his hand into the other omega's. "I'm sorry..."

"You shouldn't feel sorry," Loki frowned. "There is nothing to apologize for. I'm happy for the both of you, same as you'd supposedly be happy for me. The two of you make a beautiful couple."

"We are not a couple," Peter chuckled easily. "I'm your omega, Loki."

"I don't mind, you know," Loki swallowed down his pride. "If you go off with Tony and... do

whatever you two want to do. You're free, you can do as you like."

"Loki, I am not bedding Tony," Peter chuckled softly, shaking his head. "That is not my intention at all."

"He's the alpha you've always wanted," Loki murmured. "Rich, powerful, good, an alpha... he's the sort you hoped would buy you. And now he's interested in you. And that's fine. I don't mind."

"Loki," Peter sighed softly. "Stop this. You know I love you. You don't have to hide away all these feelings of yours. I'd much rather have an open communication."

"As would I," Loki swallowed hard.

"Right..." Peter chuckled softly, shaking his head. "Is anything else bothering you, love?"

"I'm not bothered," Loki insisted. "I'm fine."

Peter clearly didn't believe him, but he finally stopped pestering Loki at dinner. At that point, however, Bucky and Tony started trying to involve Loki in the political discussion. Loki found the other peoples' glares at the table less than inviting, though, so he just sneered before chugging down his glass of wine.

After dinner, everyone predictably started filing into the sitting room. Loki got halfway up the stairs when Peter caught his arm and began to tug him back down.

"Come on!" Peter insisted. "You should join us, it'll be fun!"

"No it won't," Loki hissed. "Let me go. I want to go upstairs and read."

"You can't keep sheltering yourself," Peter murmured. "I know you're upset, and you won't tell me what news Shuri brought but... but I think you need some cheering up. Come on, please?"

"Oh... alright," Loki sighed, straightening the lace at the front of his shirt. "But just this once. You know they don't like me."

"And that's why we show them better," Peter replied. "Because if they saw you the way I see you, they wouldn't be able to get enough of you."

"Good thing they don't, cause I've already had enough of them," Loki replied, though he couldn't help the small smile worming onto his lips. When Peter pulled him into a kiss, Loki chuckled softly and followed Peter into the sitting room even as a roll of thunder sounded in the distance.

"Sounds like a storm is coming," Bucky murmured, looking up. "It was humid enough this afternoon. Ah, Loki! Glad you could join us!"

"Someone insisted," Loki muttered, following along beside Peter who curled up on the couch next to Tony. Loki sat on his other side, his back straight.

"Well I insist on some music!" Steve declared, turning on the electric light sitting next to him. "Clint?"

"I'm on it!" The beta grinned, turning on the light at the piano and beginning to play. His fingers worked despite the alcohol that was chugging through his system. The alcohol did seem to distract him from Loki sitting at the end of the couch.

"So," Steve spoke up. "I don't know if you're all aware but T'Challa will be partnering with the

police force to try and get a handle on the omega trafficking situation. Bucky and I offered to help him, but he has refused our help. It's understandable, we're not upset, but we did want to discuss if there is some way that we could possibly appeal differently to people. Of course we cannot sacrifice our ideals and goals, but it's not helping anyone if everyone refuses our assistance."

"Well," Tony spoke up, wrapping an arm around Peter's waist. The omega looked mildly skeptical, and glanced at Loki with an apologetic blush. "First off we need to consider the picture Bucky has been painting for this group. What was it you did a week ago? Tie yourself to Lady Sif's carriage when she was trying to travel to London, was it?"

"You did?" Loki's eyebrows rose, suddenly inserting himself into the conversation.

"Yes, I did," Bucky sniffed. "It's no different than when she ties her omega to her horse during a fox hunt so that the omega doesn't lag behind."

"She what?" Peter's jaw dropped in horror.

"It's a common practice," Loki muttered. "Thor has never partaken in it, but he's the unusual alpha. The rest of the nobles nearly all do that by the end of the hunt when the omegas begin to tire. There are several reasons I would not let you go on that hunt, Peter. The way Fandral was eyeing you gave me a sinking suspicion he might be the one to drag you around when Thor wasn't paying attention."

"And the week before that," Tony cut in again. "You publicly humiliated Lord Fandral by throwing yourself at him in public, groping him, and ripping his shirt off!"

Loki burst into laughter, snorting softly before covering it with a cough and clearing his throat as he mutters, "Sorry."

"Yes?" Bucky's eyes twinkled. "Do go on."

"Well, I'm just saying, acts like these could be giving our group a, uh, less than favorable public view."

"And your point is, Stark?" Bucky raised his eyebrows as he looked between Peter and Tony.

"What wise words do you have for us, oh Lord Of Many Omegas? Are you trying to tell me that the public's opinion should dictate our actions? That talk is truly bad? Funny I haven't seen you making very many changes."

"Well to be fair no one seems to think lesser of Tony for what he does," Sam muttered.

"Right," Bucky snorted, rolling his eyes. "Course not, Alpha Stark."

"Look," Natasha interrupted. "The point of this talk is not to cause discord amongst our group."

"Exactly," Steve nodded. "As I said, we must not sacrifice our ideals just to please the public. The public has an awful double standard and we should not sway just to please them, but perhaps.... Perhaps we should also recalculate our next moves. Bucky, love, what you do is important, we all know that, but we also have new variables that might pull at the public's heart strings."

Slowly, the whole group turned to look at Peter and Loki, and the noble omega frowned, crossing his arms.

"What?" Loki spat. "Why are you looking at us?"

“Loki, you are a noble. Many of us are still held in high regard by other nobles, but that could be subject to change if we are not careful,” Steve murmured. “Your story is tragic, and of course we cannot do anything you are not comfortable with. Yet your tragic story could lend people’s hearts to the sadness of the position many, many omegas face and yet their stories are never told. And Peter, you attended Oxford’s school for omegas, yes? I will admit, none of us, except Scarlet, know what such a school is really like. But Scarlet is not in a position where she can safely speak on her experiences. I also know that omegas from such schools never get to tell their stories. If you could let the public know what it is really like, perhaps the betas and alphas in society might have more of an open ear?”

“You’re sounding a little too much like T’Challa,” Bucky muttered under his breath. “We’re not schemers, love. We don’t use people. Anyway, if we are to see a change, we have to enforce it. We cannot just use words. People’s ears are not always as strong as their eyes.”

“That isn’t what I’m suggesting at all,” Steve murmured. “You know that. I never use anyone. And neither does the Lord Mayor, although we do go about things differently.”

“But do they know that?” Bucky replied.

“Look,” Tony spoke up. “I’m all for this idea, in fact I think it’s brilliant, but we’re talking like Loki and Peter aren’t in the room. So, you two, what do you think?”

Loki swallowed hard, shifting uneasily before he muttered, “I do not want my situation broadcast to the whole of England. I don’t care what your group wants, or thinks. I am not a show for you to put on. My situation is not a drama, not an act for the public’s entertainment. I may have been disinherited, but I will not stoop to your level. I am still of noble blood, and I will not shame my family by dancing around as some pathetic side show for your sad attempt at revolution.”

“I understand,” Steve sighed softly. “I’m sorry if I insulted you in any way.”

Loki simply sniffed and crossed his arms.

“I’ll do it,” Peter suddenly spoke up. Loki turned to him in surprise, raising his eyebrows. Peter gazed at him for a moment, swallowing hard before pushing on. “I will, just tell me what needs done. I want to help your cause. I’ll admit, I’m not powerful like all of you, but I’ll help in whatever small way I can.”

Peter jumped in surprise when Tony beamed and clapped his back, laughing happily.

“There we go!” Tony declared, beaming at Peter. “Thank you, Pete, you’re wonderful.”

“Thank you,” Peter blushed. “But I... I don’t know if I’m really wonderful. I don’t even know if” I can help much. But I want to however I can. I can tell people about my school, about how we were treated and what was expected of us. About what we were told our futures would be. About how I never truly understood the world until I stepped out of my school and someone showed me the truth and reality.”

Peter’s eyes caught Loki’s again, and he smiled warmly, wiggling out of Tony’s arms so he could instead curl up next to Loki. Tony didn’t seem to mind, and he simply leaned against the arm of the couch. Loki appeared surprised, and he blinked as Peter curled into his lap, pressing a kiss against his cheek and murmuring, “Thank you. None of this would be possible without you. I never would have understood anything without you. I’d still be stuck believing my worth was tied to the worth of an alpha. Instead I’m now beginning to realize that my worth is my own, and I can do with it as I please. I can write my own story.”

"I... I taught you that?" Loki blinked, doing his best to ignore the stares pointed at him.

"Yes," Peter nodded. "As a child my aunt told me as such, she's a very powerful omega, but my school made me forget. But then you helped me remember again, and now you and Bucky are tied with my aunt as the most powerful omegas I know."

"Well," Bucky spoke up. "Thank you Peter! You're sweet."

Peter blushed lightly, pressing one more kiss to Loki's cheek and leaving the noble omega flushing.

"Maybe in two days," Bruce suddenly spoke up. "We'll be at that after party thing in London. Maybe something could happen there?"

"Perfect!" Tony agreed. "We can show you off, hm Pete? Is that okay with you? Or would you rather wait? This is your choice, your life, how do you want to do this?"

"Maybe at the party," Peter nodded. "I'll have to see how the party is, okay? But I can speak with people about it? Maybe not a... a speech at a party, but I could go around speaking with people? Is that okay, Bucky?"

"Whatever you feel comfortable with," Bucky nodded. "Now, This has all been important, but how about some fun for the night?"

Clint was part way through a song but he turned and declared, "What fun is music without some singing? Natasha?"

"Oh alright," the alpha rolled her eyes. She allowed Clint to begin a haunting sort of tune before she began to sing in a sultry voice. The song started out slow, but then little by little it picked up until nearly everyone was clapping along.

"May I have this dance?" Steve murmured to Bucky, holding his hand out. The omega grinned and allowed Steve to sweep him off his feet and into the center of the room. Bucky smiled and twirled before pulling Steve into his arms so that they could sway to the music.

"I don't suppose we can copy them, can we?" Tony murmured softly to Peter.

"Only if you insist," Peter replied, chuckling softly when Tony pulled him up. Loki frowned when the alpha's hand settled at the small of Peter's back before he swept Peter up to the music. Another roll of thunder rumbled nearby, but it was easily covered up the joyful music. Everyone was so caught up in the playful tune that they seemed to utterly be ignoring Loki, so the omega allowed a tiny grin to land on his lips despite himself. Everyone seemed to be having a marvelous time, actually, and Peter ducked his face in a blush when Tony twirled him before pulling him back into an embrace. Loki bit his lip at their beautiful dancing, turning away and trying to lose himself in the music. The song was beginning to hit a crescendo, the group clapping and laughing, when thunder rumbled much more loudly and quite suddenly the lights flickered on and off. Clint's music slowly came to a pause even as Tony froze, going white as a sheet, and Peter frowned, poking at him.

"Hey," Peter murmured. "You okay?"

"Course," Tony grinned. "Course I am. I'm always fine, always--"

He cut off in the middle of his rambling when the lightning flashed again. There was a crash from somewhere, and then the lights all went out, the house cast into pitch blackness.

“Whoa, someone got a candle?” Steve’s voice echoed through the darkness.

“Tony?” Peter’s voice made Loki freeze, and he paled at the icy fear in Peter’s tone. “Tony, where are you, are you alright? Tony? Lord Stark?! I think something is wrong, we need a light! I can’t see, are you okay?”

It was then that Loki heard a ragged panting from the same direction as Peter’s voice, and there a scramble from somewhere before a single candle lit up Natasha’s face. She waved out her match and then hurried to kneel beside Tony who looked as pale as a ghost. He’d crumpled and curled into a ball, his breath coming in short, panicked gasps as he trembled all over, his seemingly unseeing eyes flickering around the room.

“Lord Stark?” Peter murmured. His arms were wrapped around the alpha’s shoulder, but when he moved to meet Tony’s eyes, the alpha flinched, scrambling away until his back hit the wall behind him. He gazed out at the group for a long moment, clearly panicked, before understanding slowly leaked into his eyes, and Tony swallowed once, very hard.

“You okay?” Steve murmured, moving to kneel in front of Tony, who licked his lips and swallowed hard again. For one more moment, he didn’t speak, but then he was scrambling to his feet, and he surprised everyone when he shoved Steve away.

“I’m fine!” The alpha snapped, leaning heavily against the wall and pressing a hand to his forehead. “I… I’m fine. I’m fine.”

“Tony?” Peter murmured, stepping closer in concern. “Are you certain?”

“Yes,” Tony snapped, eyes flashing before he realized who was asking him and then he softened, taking a deep breath as he murmured, “Yes, Peter, I’m fine.”

“I’ll go make you some tea,” Jarvis murmured, slipping out of the room while Loki frowned, his eyebrows pulling together as he studied the alpha.

“I think you should get to bed,” Peter murmured, wrapping his arm around Tony who this time accepted the help.

“No I… I’d rather stay here,” Tony insisted, glancing around the room. “I don’t need to go to bed. Don’t need to be alone.”

“I’ll stay there with you,” Peter murmured. “I won’t leave until the storm has passed.”

Tony seemed to consider this offer for a very long moment, his tongue darting out to lick his lips, before he nodded once.

“Thank you,” Tony whispered as Peter escorted him from the room. “I’m fine, thank you.”

“Let me look you over when you get in bed,” Bruce spoke up, lighting another candle and then hurrying along beside the two of them. Their voices faded up the stairs, leaving everyone gazing at each other in silence.

“Party’s over,” Steve muttered when everyone seemed to turn to him for guidance. “I think we all need some rest.”

“What was that?” Clint frowned, swallowing. “Will he be alright?”

“It was like soldier’s heart,” Sam muttered, a deep frown on his face. “But he was never in war,

was he?”

“No, he wasn’t,” Natasha frowned. “But Steve is right, we need to all get some sleep. Everyone find a candle and gather around. I’ll light them for you.”

Loki watched as everyone lined up to light their own candles, swallowing hard when lightning lit up the room again. He was still sitting there when everyone else had already filed out, and Natasha raised her eyebrows.

“You know I’ll leave you here if you don’t hurry up,” Natasha chuckled softly. “I don’t think you want that, though.”

“Sorry,” Loki blinked, snatching a candle. “I... Well... Thank you.”

“Must be my special day,” Natasha smirked. “Never thought I’d hear a thanks from an over inflated omega like you.”

“Don’t count on hearing it again,” Loki spat, his feathers ruffling slightly, but Natasha simply smirked.

“I see you can’t take a joke. And here I thought people used to say you were funny,” Natasha raised an eyebrow.

“Who said that?” Loki frowned.

“I dunno,” Natasha replied. “Guess.”

She then turned and marched from the room, leaving Loki with his flickering candle.

The night felt slow and Loki had a hard time getting to sleep without Peter curled up next to him. His chest ached slightly at the thought that Peter was probably curled up next to Tony instead, but Loki tried hard to push any feelings of jealousy away. Peter said that love was making sacrifices for the person you loved, and Peter should have the freedom to do as he liked same as Tony had that freedom. Besides, Tony had clearly been disturbed by something, though Loki knew not what. The fact that Peter was the one in there comforting him didn’t help, though, and jealousy bubbled up again.

“I’m fine,” Loki suddenly hissed to himself, his voice cutting through the silent room. “It’s fine.”

Lightning flashed, casting odd shadows around the room, and Loki swallowed hard, curling up under the covers. Something within him wished for his brother to be here with him, but he stuffed away those thoughts the minute they bubbled up.

Thor, Peter, Tony, really any of them might make his heart stop hammering, might chase away the nightmares. He’d always hated storms, he knew not why. But he was alone now, and he didn’t need anyone. He was strong enough on his own, Loki told himself, until thunder rumbled and he curled up tighter, shaking.

Loki didn’t remember falling asleep, but the next morning he woke up to Peter curled up next to him. Peter pressed a chaste kiss to Loki’s lips before motioning to the bedside table where breakfast sat ready and waiting. Loki blinked in surprise, gazing over at Peter who smiled and held out a little cup.

“Tea?” Peter asked.

“Good morning...” Loki murmured, gazing at Peter in shock. “I thought you’d be with Tony.”

“I was, but then I got us breakfast and came in here! The storm has passed, though it’s very wet outside... I hope you slept alright?”

“I... Yes, I was fine,” Loki murmured, accepting the tea held out to him and settling the plate of steaming pancakes in front of him. “And is Tony alright?”

“He is now,” Peter nodded. “He just needed someone to sit with him, to make sure he stayed safe.”

“Right,” Loki nodded once, suppressing a soft sigh. “And I... I am glad you could do that for him.”

“Loki,” Peter murmured. “I was hoping to help Tony some more with his flying machine today, but I won’t do that if you don’t want me to.”

“You should do as you like,” Loki told him, swallowing down any rogue feelings that started bubbling up his throat. “If you want to help Tony then... then you shall.”

“Loki,” Peter murmured, reaching over to squeeze at Loki’s arm. “You know I love you?”

“I... I love you too,” Loki blinked, clearly surprised by Peter’s words. He gazed at Peter, watching as the omega returned to his breakfast, and Loki slowly took a bite of pancakes, gazing at Peter in silent surprise.

“I’ve been reading 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea,” Loki spoke a few moments later. “It’s not bad, you know? I’m afraid I don’t know a thing about machines, but I figured this might help. I, uh, it’s not Shakespeare but it’s not bad.”

“Perhaps sometime we’ll talk about it,” Peter declared, leaning closer to press a kiss to Loki’s lips.

“Well I... I thought perhaps we could talk about it now?” Loki suggested. “Or maybe we could take our breakfast to Tony and the three of us could speak about it?”

“Oh, Tony is already outside with the machine. We got it into the shed yesterday afternoon but he wanted to make sure the shed didn’t leak. I should join him out there, now, actually. He’s still a little shaken, and I think Bruce is also out there with him but I don’t want to leave him for too long. He was upset almost all last night, needed a lot of comforting for some reason. He wouldn’t say why. Anyway I want to go make sure he’s still okay. Perhaps we could talk about the book later? Anyway, I’ll miss you during the day,” Peter smiled, quickly finishing his breakfast and kissing Loki once more.

“Yeah I... I’ll be thinking of you,” Loki spoke, choosing not to admit how much he’d miss his lover. Nor would he admit that Peter’s easy dismissal of Loki’s attempt to begin a conversation about the book made Loki’s heart ache. Peter started getting up, but Loki called him back hesitantly. “Peter? You don’t mind that I’m... well you always wanted an alpha like Tony. And I’m not. I’m just an omega.”

“Just?” Peter chuckled skeptically. “What is that supposed to mean? Just an omega? Remember what Bucky says, omegas are no less or more than alphas.”

“It’s just that, well, little more than a week ago we were servant and master, and now suddenly we are forbidden lovers, cast out by my father. Have you told Aunt May? Are you truly alright with this? This isn’t the life you were expecting with me...” Loki sighed softly.

"I..." Peter hesitated, swallowing hard. "Well, actually I haven't told May yet. Just because I don't want her to worry. She worries, you know, about little things. But that doesn't mean anything. That doesn't mean I'm not happy. I am happy! Happier than I ever was before."

"I see," Loki murmured, swallowing hard. "She... she sent you to be with Lord Loki Odinson, though. Not... cast out, titleless Loki."

"I don't care," Peter murmured, pushing Loki's hair back. "What she would say, or what anyone says. You've been kind to me, love. And I care deeply for you."

"You could have more," Loki murmured. "More that I can't give you now."

"I'm happy now, you know. I'm happy with what we have. I don't need anything else, okay? Don't worry, you've given me more than enough," Peter murmured, pressing his lips to Loki's. Their kiss was hard, and needy, and Loki moaned softly into it. His hands wandered to tangle in Peter's hair, yet much too soon the kiss came to an end, leaving Loki panting softly. He swallowed hard when Peter stood, pulling on work clothes and work boots.

"I'll see you at dinner, alright?" Peter murmured. "See you, love."

Loki swallowed, watching Peter hop out of the room. After taking a deep breath, Loki moved to gaze out the window, watching as Peter appeared far below, dashing out and greeting Tony with a hug. There was a smile on Tony's face, a smile so big that it almost reminded Loki of the way the alpha had looked when they were children. And suddenly the ache in Loki's heart spread so that he felt weak all over, and he swallowed down a soft sob. He remembered when he used to make Tony look like that. But now, as always, the alpha had moved on from Loki. And soon Peter would likely move on as well. Loki could already feel it. Peter said he had love for him, but gazing down below, Loki could feel it deep within himself. It was only a matter of time. All of his lovers moved on. He was nice for a night, maybe two, but no one ever stuck around.

Loki leaned heavily against the wall, pulling his knees to his chest and swallowing hard. If Frigga were here she'd pull him into her arms, kiss his forehead, and tell him to stop moping. She'd tell him that he'd always be loved, and deep within himself, Loki longed for his mother's love, and his father's approval, but he somehow doubted that he would taste either of those things ever again.

Loki had made so many mistakes in his life. He'd hurt his family when he first dated an omega, even when it was an accident. He'd seen the danger attached to such a romance, and now he subjected Peter to that same danger. In the end, perhaps it was best if Peter did move on. Tony was everything Peter needed, and wasn't love sacrificing your own happiness for your lover's? And Loki did love Peter, he loved him desperately. He loved both Tony and Peter, and again jealousy bubbled up in his chest before he pushed the feelings away.

Perhaps he was wrong. Peter did seem to love him. Perhaps this whole thing with Tony wasn't anything to be concerned about. Perhaps Loki was wrong, and Peter wouldn't leave him. Yet when Loki looked outside, he had to suppress a soft sob. He was kidding no one but himself. He could wish forever for the sort of bond Peter seemed to be developing with Tony, the two of them smiling and laughing outside, seated in the grass and not even looking at the flying machine at the moment, but it seemed Loki simply wasn't destined for such happiness.

But he wouldn't leave now, Loki decided. There was a chance that he was wrong. Tomorrow was the play, tomorrow they were going to see Romeo and Juliet. In the same way that Peter and Tony could bond over machines and engines, perhaps Loki and Peter could bond over Shakespeare. Perhaps everything would be better tomorrow. That's what Frigga always told Loki. Things could always look better with time.

So for now, the omega grabbed a book and began to read, trying hard to ignore the sounds of laughter leaking through his window. Trying hard to ignore any jealousy. Trying hard to pretend that everything was fine, that he was fine, and that maybe things would still work out.

Some small part of Loki wondered what his brother was doing now. Did Thor truly miss him? Would his brother move on the same way everyone did? Would Thor truly leave him in exile if he never allowed himself to be taught to love alphas? Would Thor enforce his father's wishes even when their father was too ill to give them? Thor had always loved and admired Odin, and Loki knew that Odin would always come first, would always be more important to Thor than his useless little omega brother. And perhaps Thor did long for more, did long for the sea, but he wasn't truly trapped. He could leave at any time, yet he chose to stay. He chose to stay in the safety and warmth of Odin Manor while Loki curled up in the window of a manor where it seemed he would never be truly welcome.

He should not be jealous of his brother, Loki told himself, should not be jealous of Tony, or of Peter. Loki's favorite color had always been green, but it was because green was an elegant, grand color. Yet now it seemed that the green of jealousy was destined to control Loki's heart and mind, and however much Loki tried to push such thoughts away, the hateful thoughts only made his head hurt more.

"You're fine," Loki spoke allowed, his voice echoing in the room. "They're fine. You are not jealous. You are happy for them. You are happy. I am happy. I am. I am happy. I am fine."

He realized only after that that his hands were shaking, and he snapped his book shut, curling up in a ball and suppressing his soft sobs.

I think I'm fine

I think I'm tough

Until I go

And fall in love

I always try hard to conceal

But the more I hide

The worse I feel

Chapter End Notes

This chapter makes my heart hurt for Loki :/ What do you all think of his situation? Do you think he could or should make a move to bring up his feelings? Just realistically, though, Loki isn't the best at open communication... I look forward to your comments and I hope you enjoyed this chapter.

The Outsider

Chapter Notes

Another chapter already? Shocking, I know...

thanks for all your comments and also thank you to lokislonleylady for helping me figure out a few details for this chapter

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

These people are weird in here

And they're giving me the fear

Just because you know my name

Doesn't mean you know my game

I look myself in the face

And whisper "I'm in the wrong place"

Is there more to lose than gain

If I go on my own again?

When the day rolled around to go to London to see Romeo and Juliet, Loki was actually looking forward to it. Maybe that was their plan all along: to make him so tired of his routine that he would start to actually care about their ridiculous rendition of what should be a masterpiece. To make Juliet an alpha and Romeo an omega might be revolutionary, but Loki found it a crime of the theater. Of course Loki dreamed about playing the role of Hamlet which he knew was written for an alpha, but firstly he knew better than to believe he would ever truly be able to take on such a role and secondly he knew that if he did he would do the role justice. He had his doubts about this group.

Still, the morning before the trip to London everyone was abuzz. Natasha and Clint had already left a day before along with Steve and Bucky, who planned to meet the group at the theater. Sam, too, had left a day early as he had work to attend to, and the manor felt oddly quiet without them. Still, Peter seemed excited when Scarlet showed up the morning of the play. She explained that she'd escaped for the day and could travel to London. Interestingly, Jarvis seemed more than thrilled and Loki smirked lightly when he spotted them standing quite close and whispering to each other in the kitchen.

Soon enough it came time to leave and Bruce, Tony and Peter piled into the front seat of the automobile while Loki was stuck in the back with Jarvis and Scarlet. Loki didn't mind either Scarlet or Jarvis all that much, but he didn't appreciate the way they kissed each other when they thought he wasn't looking. He also didn't appreciate the way Peter clung to Tony's arm as the alpha drove, soaking up everything he needed to know to be able to operate the vehicle himself.

"Maybe you want to try driving on the way home?" Tony grinned at the omega, who nodded hopefully.

“Can I really?” Peter gushed. “Thank you, I’d love to!”

Loki simply glowered at them from the backseat, sulking until they arrived.

The theater was shockingly large. Somehow, Loki had imagined that this theater group was small, liberal, and insignificant, but he had to admit that he was impressed when they walked into a theater filled with alphas with monocles and omegas with real diamond necklaces. The theater was packed with people, and Tony led the group to a private balcony where Bucky and Steve were already seated along with the alpha Peter recognized as Rhodey. The couple greeted the newcomers with hugs while Rhodey simply smiled at the group kindly.

“Figured I’d come see what all the fuss is about,” the colonel declared.

“Well I don’t think you’ll regret it, but don’t blame me if you do,” Tony grinned, sitting near the edge of the balcony. He motioned for Peter to sit beside him, raising his eyebrows when Peter hesitated.

“Come on,” Tony encouraged. “These are the best seats in the house.”

“Yes, alright, thank you. Come on, Loki” Peter declared hopefully, slipping his hand into the other omega’s. “Sit by me, love, please?”

Loki was hesitant, however he slipped into the chair beside Peter. Loki smiled weakly when Peter wrapped an arm around him, pressing a kiss to his lover’s cheek.

“I can’t wait,” Peter whispered to him. “Maybe you can join a company like this one day!”

“Peter, hush,” Loki scolded, blushing. “I already told you, I can’t go on the stage.”

“Loki?” Bucky spoke up. “Are you interested in performing?”

“No, no I am not,” Loki declared firmly. “I enjoy the art of Shakespeare but I will not be an actor.”

“You could be,” Peter whispered. “If you wanted. I bet you’d be amazing at any role you ever tried. I know you’re my Romeo.”

“Hey Peter, look at this,” Tony called. Peter chuckled, rolling his eyes and pressing a final kiss to Loki’s cheek before returning his attention to Tony. Loki’s fingers brushed against his own cheek before he sighed and gazed over at the stage, firmly ignoring both Peter and Tony. He didn’t have to ignore them for long because moments later the lights began to dim and then the first act began. Despite how much Loki wanted to scorn the play, how much he desperately wanted to tell himself that tampering with Shakespeare was a sin, he had to admit that he was enamored. The first hour felt like 10 minutes to him, and any thoughts about Peter curled up next to Tony fled his mind only to be replaced joy and amazement. When the play began to draw to a close, Loki found himself blinking away emotion, and when people began to clap Loki was one of many who gave the actors a standing ovation.

“So,” Bucky murmured to him. “You like it?”

“Shut up,” Loki chuckled softly. “You should know I don’t like anything.”

“Except yourself?” Bucky smirked.

“Hey,” Loki glared lightly. “I told you to shut up.”

Bucky grinned, clapping Loki on the back and then turning back to Steve. When the lights in the theater came back on, Tony stood up, stretched, and declared that they were all invited to the after party at some fancy hotel down the block.

“Drinks are on me,” Tony grinned.

“Fine, long as you aren’t the one drinking them,” Rhodey muttered. “Don’t think Dr Banner hasn’t told me what you’ve been up to.”

“Who me?” Tony blinked mock-innocently. “I haven’t the slightest idea of what you could be referring to. Come on, Pete, you want to drive us to the hotel?”

“I think I’ll walk there with Loki, actually,” Peter murmured, linking his arm through the other omega’s. “We’ll meet you there, okay?”

“No problem,” Steve nodded. “You two will be alright walking by yourselves?”

“Steve,” Bucky glared lightly. “Come on.”

“Sorry,” Steve blushed. “I just... worry, you know?”

“We’ll be fine,” Peter promised. “Come on, love. Bet we can get there faster than your automobile, Tony!”

“You know I love challenges,” Tony grinned. “Come on, everyone. Last one downstairs is paying the food bill!”

Loki allowed Peter to drag him out of the theater, and he chuckled weakly as Peter wrapped himself around Loki’s forearm and pressed kisses against his neck.

“That was amazing!” Peter beamed, practically dancing out the moonlit street the moment they stepped outside. “I’ve never seen a true play like that before! Have you? Well I suppose you have, but I haven’t! It was incredible! And the omega playing Romeo was so pretty, wasn’t she? And the alpha playing Juliet, well she was amazing! I never knew theater could be like this! You should be in a play, please Loki?”

“Peter, hush,” Loki murmured, glancing around the dark street uneasily. “We don’t know who could be out tonight.”

“Who’d want to come after us?” Peter chuckled. “It isn’t as if we have any money!”

“But they don’t know that,” Loki murmured. “And we’re dressed like we do.”

“But this is the nice area of town,” Peter laughed easily. “A thief wouldn’t bother us here!”

“We are two omegas,” Loki spat, desperately pulling his arm away from Peter before anyone could see them. “It isn’t thieves that I’m worried about. Peter, I’m sorry, but please... we cannot be so open. It’s not safe.”

“But... But we’ll be alright,” Peter murmured, chewing on his lip. “Don’t worry, we can protect each other. Come on, love. You don’t need to be afraid.”

“You should be more cautious,” Loki sighed, pulling away when Peter tried to kiss him, his eyes flying about the street in search for danger. “We don’t know who could be watching.”

“We don’t need to worry,” Peter murmured, leaping up and kissing Loki when the older omega

was distracted.

“Peter, please,” Loki begged, turning back to his younger lover and swallowing hard. “I don’t want anything to happen to you. And I don’t know that I can protect you if someone tried to hurt you.”

“I’ll be okay,” Peter promised. “I will. But... but I’ll stop if you want me to.”

“Just while we’re in public, please?” Loki begged softly. “I can’t let you be hurt...”

Peter didn’t answer verbally, but instead he slipped his hand into Loki’s and lead him to the hotel.

Brown’s Hotel was an elegant, beautiful building upon which lines gleamed as cheery music floated out the open windows.

“Goodness...” Loki murmured, blinking in surprise. “How in the world did they manage to book this place? This is one of the top hotels in all of London! I never believed we would be going somewhere so elegant...”

“Tony booked it,” Peter smiled happily. “He says he takes only the best. Anyway let’s go in! Oh, sorry, I forgot you don’t want to join arms.. but nothing happened, see? You need to let yourself relax and have a good time sometimes, like Tony!”

Peter held Loki’s hand anyway and dragged him in past a rather unhappy doorman who wrinkled his nose at the two omegas. Peter led Loki to a small elegant ballroom where Natasha greeted them, dressed in an elegant red evening suit.

“Welcome,” she smiled, a small smirk directed at Loki. “Enjoy the play? Or was it not... elegant enough?”

Natasha raised one perfectly painted eyebrow before turning and swishing into the small crowd. The music was cheery and modern, and the sounds of soft talking and clinking of champagne flutes filled the air. It seemed there were more people present than only Tony’s closest group, but no one seemed to give Peter or Loki any mind.

Peter found Tony already seated in the corner, surrounded by their closest friends, and he grinned, lifting a glass at Peter.

“Looks like I won,” Tony grinned. “You owe me a drink.”

“I don’t owe you anything,” Peter sniffled, leaving Loki’s side to playfully bump his hip against Tony side. Tony laughed and wrapped an arm around Peter hips, and much to Loki’s shock the alpha pulled Peter onto his lap. Peter didn’t seem to mind, and he chuckled easily, mussing Tony’s hair and snatching the drink away from the alpha to finish it off himself. Once it was done, he set it aside and gently bopped Tony on the nose, commanding, “No more drink, alright? We should all be able to enjoy tonight, and I don’t want to have to be worrying about you, alright? Promise?”

“I promise,” Tony rolled his eyes, winking at Steve beside him who sighed softly and shook his head.

“So,” Steve sighed, his hand settled easily across Bucky’s shoulders. “Loki, Peter, I hope you both enjoy tonight. Bucky will be giving a small talk in a few minutes. Would you be interested in giving any sort of talk yourself, Peter?”

“Well I... I don’t know. There’s an awfully big crowd here,” Peter worried his lip as he gazed around the room. “I won’t say no, though... we’ll see?”

“Sounds good,” Bucky smiled. “We can just see how this goes. So, Loki, this must be nice for you! Finally someplace elegant, hm?”

“I don’t care about a location’s elegance. I care much more about the people I associate myself with,” Loki replied stiffly.

“Right,” Bucky blinked, his mouth setting into a hard line for a moment. “Well, there are some nobles over in that corner, perhaps you’d best run along?”

“Bucky,” Steve hissed softly, blushing and murmuring a soft apology to Loki, who simply narrowed his eyes.

“I’m comfortable right here, actually,” Loki replied, slowly lowering himself into an empty chair and snatching a glass of dark red wine as a server walked by. The group gazed at him for a long moment, however Peter cleared his throat to break up the awkward silence.

“So... Where’s Bruce?” Peter asked, glancing around and making himself more comfortable on Tony’s lap. Loki suppressed a soft snarl and downed half his glass of wine.

“Oh, uh, Banner isn’t a huge fan of crowds,” Steve murmured, glancing at his friends. “He’s, uh... he can’t, uh...”

“He turns into a monster,” Loki spoke easily over another sip of wine. Peter chuckled, assuming this was a joke, but everyone at the table simply shifted awkwardly as Tony glared lightly at the omega.

“Loki, please,” Steve sighed. “He does not. He just... Well you know, he just isn’t... I mean if someone were to, you know, then he just sort of... well he can’t help it, you know?”

“It was his formula,” Loki explained casually, sipping down some more wine and smiling at Peter as if this was the most normal conversation in the world. “He wanted to create a formula to keep alphas from reacting to the scent of omegas in heat. The University he worked for wanted him to hurry up, don’t you know, and the dean stated the formula was to be finished within a week and they would begin tests on poor alphas from the slums who were looking for a job. Banner had months left to go, I’ve heard, but the darling doctor tried the formula on himself before it could be tested by any unwitting victims. It didn’t work, of course, and now if any omegas go into heat I’m told he turns into a raging beast, isn’t that right?”

“He doesn’t like crowds,” Tony sighed deeply. “And that’s that. Why don’t you go bother some other table?”

“You wish for me to leave?” Loki crossed his arms. “Fine, I will.”

“Loki wait,” Tony sighed, calling him back. “I don’t truly want you to leave, I simply wish you wouldn’t have such contempt for my friend. Everything he’s done while affected by the serum has been an accident. You have no reason to hate him.”

“Don’t I?” Loki crossed his arms tightly, his jaw clenched. He glared out at the table for a long moment before he stood abruptly and muttered, “Excuse me, please.”

“Loki?” Peter frowned, reaching out to let his fingers trace Loki’s knuckles. The older omega swallowed hard, flinching away and raising his chin proudly, trying to ignore the curl of Tony’s arm around Peter’s waist.

“I said excuse me,” Loki repeated, and then he brushed past Peter, storming off to the open bar and

ordering something strong.

“Is he alright?” Peter blinked, turning back to the group in confusion.

“He... had a run in with Doctor Banner once,” Steve murmured softly. “He was unharmed, but I’m sure it was jarring for him. Banner doesn’t remember any of it, he never does.”

“He wasn’t unharmed,” Bucky muttered. “Bruce could have nearly shattered Loki’s spine with the way he threw him against the wall. It’s only thanks to Tony it wasn’t worse.”

“I’ve barely been able to get Bruce out of solitude,” Tony sighed. “And still he won’t come to parties like this. Natasha seems to have better luck than I do, but I still wish Loki wouldn’t treat him so. It only makes it worse.”

“You can’t hold this against him,” Bucky insisted.

“I know, I’m sorry,” Tony sighed. “My fault. Someone want to go stop him before he ends up like me on a Saturday night?”

“Unlike some people, I think Loki knows how to pace himself,” Steve glanced over at Loki, who was nursing his drink at the bar. “Are you ready for our speech, love?”

“I am,” Bucky smiled. “Tony, Peter you two don’t have too much fun without us, yes?”

“Normally I give the speeches,” Tony murmured, holding Peter a little closer. “It’s just this once that Bucky is doing it.”

“That’s nice,” Peter chuckled. “But speeches don’t particularly impress me. It’s true actions that impress me.”

“Guess I’ll have to do more of them then, hm? Monsieur, another drink for the pretty omega!” Tony called over a server, and Peter chuckled and rolled his eyes, though his gaze turned to linger on Loki. He swallowed hard, shifting nervously and chewing his lip.

“I should go cheer him up,” Peter murmured. “I don’t want him to feel bad.”

“He always feels bad,” Tony sighed. “But you’re right, he isn’t looking too hot. Good luck, okay?”

Peter was about to stand and make his way over, and a voice boomed over the group and then Bucky and Steve stepped onto the makeshift stage. Everyone in the room turned to clap, beaming at them. Peter bit his lip as everyone sat down, prepared for the speech, and his window to approach Loki was lost. Still, Peter promised himself, after this speech he’d go make Loki feel better.

“Welcome everyone!” Steve smiled, waving at the crowd. “That was an excellent play, was it not? I was very impressed. A big thank you to the actors for giving us such a wonderful night! But I’m not the one who’s here to talk to you now. I think Bucky is much more fit to speak out our discussion of the night. And much more entertaining.”

“Thank you,” Bucky chuckled softly before launching into his prepared speech about the affects the play was having on the way people approached omegas. He spoke about omega history in theater, and how this play was changing the way omegas were portrayed in popular culture. Peter only paid half attention as his focus was mostly on Loki. The dark haired omega had a dark look on his face. Peter noticed that his hand trembled slightly when he picked up his glass and finished it off before ordering another.

“The theater isn’t the only place where views are changing,” Bucky was saying when Peter pulled his attention back. “Even some omegas who come from classic training school are beginning to see things in a new light. A good friend of mine was recently taken from Oxford’s school, and I have never met another omega who is so brilliant with machines. He has so many ideas for a better future, and if he had been limited by our perceptions of an omega’s capabilities, then we would all end up suffering in the end.”

“I want to talk,” Peter suddenly murmured, pulling away from where Tony had pressed his nose into the crook of Peter’s neck. “I’m going to talk.”

“Oh, well good luck! Knock them dead,” Tony grinned kindly, patting Peter to send him on his way. Peter ignored the distracting touch best he could and wormed away from Tony before hopping up and making his way over.

“Oh!” Bucky smiled down at him. “And here he is, my good friend Peter! Welcome! Peter is going to talk to you for a little bit.”

“Thank you,” Peter murmured, hopping up onto the stage and averting his gaze from wandering eyes of several alphas. Instead, Peter did his best to catch Loki’s eye, though his lover seemed a little too tipsy to notice. “Yes, I did attend Oxford’s School. It, uh, I was discouraged from machines and science when I attended there. I grew up being told that my self worth was only as good as my alpha. I believed the school because I knew little else. I will admit that I snuck a book or two at school that I wasn’t meant to because I did so want to learn about science, but I also lived in a state of fear that I might be discovered. I think that fear would’ve never gone away if it hadn’t been for Lord Stark showing me different.”

That caught Loki’s attention, and Peter bit his lip, quickly moving on.

“Lord Stark showed me that it was okay for me to nurture these interests. He was the first alpha I’d met that truly nurtured my intelligence over my.... my appearance. At school, of course, we were taught how to properly simper, giggle, groom ourselves, dance, please alphas, care for the home, but never how to use our own minds. From the moment I entered my school, I never saw an omega use their own mind. In fact it wasn’t until I met my lov... uh, until I met my friend Loki that I saw an omega with intelligence. Loki opened my eyes to a new sort of world, and then when Loki and I went to live with Tony Stark, suddenly my world was changed forever.”

Peter glanced back over to the bar, hoping to catch Loki’s eye again, but the boy deflated slightly when he realized Loki was gone. The omega must have slipped out during the second bit of his speech, and Peter’s teeth caught his bottom lip in a worried little bite.

“Is it true that school takes in destitute omegas from the lower classes?” A posh woman in the second row asked. She appeared to be a theater goer and clearly wasn’t from Tony’s group of renegades. She sniffed and fondled her pearl necklace as she asked. “Isn’t it a good thing for the poor dears?”

“I...” Peter blinked at Bucky. “I suppose in some ways. I will openly admit that I was from the east end and the school did provide me the opportunity for a possibly better life. That doesn’t mean my mind nor interests were nurtured. And we were told that we would give nothing to the world if we did not keep house for an honorable alpha... But I learned better, I learned there is hope for all omegas, that there are places where we can be valued!”

“How were you taught to please alphas while still remaining pure for your future alpha?” A man near her boldly asked, a sly grin on his face. “Surely at such a school you got proper training, so are they selling impure merchandise?”

Peter paled slightly, and Bucky stepped forward, his face red. Steve caught his arm and stepped up to stand beside Peter.

“I think we’ll have no more questions,” Steve frowned. “Thank you for listening tonight, ladies and gentlemen.”

Peter blinked as one of two cameras flashed in his face and then he stepped off the stage with Steve and Bucky. As he began to approach his table, someone caught his arm and he glanced down to see a petite omega seated at the end of the row. The boy looked about Peter’s age, maybe a tad younger, and he smiled kindly, his eyes sparkling.

“Thank you,” he whispered. “I hope to be like you someday.”

In that one moment, Peter melted, and in a soft voice he murmured, “You will be.”

“Hey,” the alpha seated beside the boy turned, his eyes narrowing on Peter as he murmured, “Can I help you?”

“No, thank you. I hope you enjoyed the show tonight, sir alpha,” Peter ducked his head respectfully before dashing off to his table. The moment he arrived, Tony gently pulled Peter back on his lap. Peter found himself swallowing hard and shifting uneasily, before he quite suddenly pulled himself away, leaving Tony looking confused.

“Peter, are you alright?” Tony murmured softly.

“Yes, thank you, I think I just don’t want to do that right now,” Peter murmured, slipping into his own chair. “I’m... tired.”

“Of course,” Tony nodded. “I’m sorry, Peter. Wonderful talk, by the way. There should be more omegas like you, brave and brilliant. Perhaps you will be an inspiration to many.”

“Thank you, Tony,” Peter blushed and ducked his head. “You’re too kind. Have you seen Loki?”

“He stepped out,” Tony sighed softly. “I expect he wants to be alone. I’d like to go make sure he’s alright but... well I don’t want to upset him if he doesn’t want someone bothering him...”

“If he doesn’t want us bothering him then he can tell us himself,” Peter murmured. “Let’s go find him, please?”

“Alright,” Tony agreed. “Lead the way.”

Peter felt strangely tense when Tony let his hands wander to Peter’s waist as he seemed wont to do. Normally Peter wouldn’t mind such a touch, but right now it made him feel a little uncomfortable. Peter easily blamed the odd, unpleasant feeling on the other alpha’s rude words during the speech; after all, his words had left a bad taste in Peter’s mouth. Anyway, Tony’s arm around his waist was a safety blanket against any other curious alphas, so Peter remained silent on the issue. The two made their way through the crowd, and concern leaped in Peter’s throat when he spotted Loki pressed into a corner by a distinguished alpha with the beginnings of grey at his temples.

“I have a room right upstairs,” the alpha was murmuring softly, running one hand in a caress along Loki’s neck. “You’d look so pretty stretched out across the taffeta sheets.”

“Wilson, please,” Loki murmured, gently pushing the alpha back. “I... not anymore, alright? Please, I’m different now.”

“Different? How are you different, darling?” Wilson chuckled softly, moving closer to gently sniff at Loki’s neck. “How does one like you ever truly change, hm? You still smell just as sweet. Do you think I’ve forgotten all of those times at your father’s stuffy parties? You always loved breaking away with me...”

“I...” Loki tensed, looking past Wilson. His eyes landed on Peter and Tony, his gaze falling from their faces to the arm around Peter’s waist. Something in his gaze must’ve triggered something inside of Tony, for the alpha let his arm drop down from Peter’s waist instantly. The damage appeared to already be done, though, for Loki narrowed his eyes and then focused back on Wilson.

“Actually,” Loki murmured in a sultry voice. “I changed my mind. Just show me the way, darling.”

“I knew you would change your mind,” Wilson chuckled, burrowing his nose against Loki’s neck and taking a long inhale. “Come along, my dear.”

The man swept Loki into the cage elevator, leaving Peter and Tony gazing after him.

“Well,” Tony blinked, swallowing hard. “I think he’s fine. Come, Peter, I, uh, I need a drink.”

“Tony, please, you don’t need a drink,” Peter murmured, turning back to him and gently pulled at the front of his waist coat. “You don’t.”

Tony blinked at him for a long moment, before he huffed and pulled away, running a shaking hand through his hair. For a long moment he seemed to hesitate, yet his eyes flickered towards the elevator and then he shook his head.

“I don’t need your approval,” Tony suddenly declared. “I want a drink.”

“Tony, please,” Peter tried, reaching out towards the alpha. He swallowed down a soft noise when the alpha pulled away, his hand still shaking. They looked away for a long moment, clear hesitation in Tony’s gaze. Peter reached out again for Tony, running his hands down the front of the alpha’s coat as he murmured, “Please, you don’t need one. Come on, let’s go back and talk to Steve and Bucky and Rhodey, please? Come on. You don’t need that, you just need good company. You just need good friends. You’re not alone, remember? No matter what Loki does, you’ll always be loved by some people, by your friends. You’ll never be alone. You won’t be abandoned. I promise, I’ll stay with you. Remember? I promise I won’t leave you alone.”

Tony swallowed hard, moisture gathering at the crinkles of his eyes, but he blinked the moisture away and then flashed a falsely cheery grin.

“Course, I know that,” Tony chuckled easily. “You’re right, you always are. Come, I bet they’re missing us right now.”

“Of course they are,” Peter smiled. “They’re just waiting for your return.”

“And yours,” Tony smiled. “You’re the true life of any party, Peter.”

Peter blushed and let Tony wrap an arm around his waist again. This time it felt much more comfortable, and Peter let himself relax and melt against the alpha.

That evening, when the party started winding to a close, Loki appeared at the bar end of the ballroom, his hair and clothes crumpled and messy. He walked with a slight limp which made concern blossom in Peter’s chest. He gently prodded Tony’s ribs, and the alpha turned and paled when he saw Loki.

Immediately, Tony stumbled to his feet and hurried over, looking Loki up and down with a clinical eye.

“Are you alright?” Tony murmured. “He didn’t hurt you, did he? Come, there is a chair for you. Do you need help, love?”

“I’m fine,” Loki snapped softly. “I wish to go home.”

“Loki, please,” Tony whispered, stepping closer. “Do you need help, anything? Should I call for Dr Banner?”

“I said I’m fine!” Loki snapped. “I’ll find the carriage myself.”

“Please, if you’re hurt I can help you! If Wilson hurt you I’ll flay him alive, I’ll make sure this never happens again,” Tony growled softly, swallowing hard and reaching out to Loki, but the omega pulled insistently away.

“He didn’t hurt me,” Loki’s eyes narrowed. “I said I’m fine. Now will you just believe me and take us all home?”

“But Loki, you look hurt...” Peter murmured, coming up beside Tony. “Please, let us help?”

“I don’t need hurt,” Loki spat, turning away. He flinched when Peter reached over to wrap an arm around his waist, pressing a kiss against his cheek.

“Come on,” Peter murmured. “Let’s get you to the carriage, okay?”

“I...” For a moment, tears rose up in Loki’s eyes, and he wet his lips as he did his best to blink them away. He took several long, calming breaths before he softly murmured, “Peter, I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have done this tonight. I... I don’t care for him. You know that yes? I care for you...”

“I know,” Peter murmured gently. “Come on, let’s go to the carriage. Don’t worry, I’m not upset.”

Loki swallowed hard again and nodded, allowing Peter to gently pull him along towards the carriage. They cuddled there for a few minutes, Loki silent as he sat curled up in Peter’s arms. The two remained in a close embrace as everyone filed out of the hotel. Once Tony arrived at the carriage, he silently hopped up into the front seat, and Peter pressed a kiss against Loki’s temple.

“Are you okay, now?” Peter murmured softly. “You okay, love?”

“Thank you,” Loki murmured. “Yes, I’ll be okay.”

“Good,” Peter kissed him gently again. “I was worried.”

Loki was going to open his mouth to say more, but he was left blinking in surprise when Peter peeled out of his arms and hopped into the front seat next to Tony.

“May I drive home?” Peter asked hopefully. “You said I could.”

“I...” Tony blinked, glancing back at Loki in surprise, before he nodded. “Of course, if you’d like. Here, I’ll show you how.”

Loki watched as Tony helped show Peter the ropes, and soon the automobile rumbled to life and began bumping along the dark streets. For a moment, Loki almost wanted to say something, however he noticed Scarlet was curled up and sleeping against Jarvis’ chest, so rather than wake her up Loki simply curled up in a ball and gazed out at the dark countryside bouncing along.

Chapter End Notes

As Loki once essentially said, people in the MCU are not great at open communication. I think the real question is how much more of this can our characters (namely Loki) handle before something snaps... I look forward to your comments again. I'll warn you, the next chapter is a big one....

Emotional Machine

Chapter Notes

Warning for minor character death

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It's hard to see that you wanna be free

'Cause I don't love you in the way that you want me to

Did you ever truly love me?

Were you just too scared to be free?

My God is dying silently

Nobody believes, Nobody believes

I'm a machine, an emotional being

Since I was a teen, cut my feelings off clean

It's no excuse to treat me like you do

My perception is skewed 'cause I know what you went through

When the group finally arrived home, it was decided that Jarvis would take Scarlet home as she was convinced her brother would be able to sneak her into her manor, so Loki watched as the two of them rode away on Scarlet's midnight black horse. From inside, Loki could hear Tony and Peter laughing happily. From up the road, Loki heard another engine putting along, and he groaned internally. So the party wasn't over yet. He should've known Tony's friends would follow them home for more free booze. The sound of Sam's laugh echoing over the field confirmed Loki's suspicions, and so he ducked into the foyer. He spotted Tony, Peter, and Bruce gathered around a blueprint of some kind, Tony's arm slung over Peter's shoulder to pull the omega close to his side. Peter tucked perfectly against him, their figures casting a silhouette that looked like lovers on the wall. The moment Loki stepped one foot into the room, the group of three turned to gaze up at him in surprise.

"You need something, love?" Peter murmured. "We're just looking at the new flying machine design."

"No, I guess not," Loki sniffed. "Your friends are arriving shortly."

"Wonderful!" Tony beamed. "Bruce, get out the scotch will you?"

"Loki, why don't you join us for a drink?" Peter asked suddenly, letting out a soft, giggling yelp as Tony suddenly pulled him closer into his arms and then onto his lap as the alpha sat in his favorite velvet arm chair.

“Oh yes, please do?” Tony asked hopefully, gazing up at Loki.

“I’m not in the mood,” Loki replied coldly, crossing his arms over his chest. “If you really need me, I’ll be in my room.”

“Loki, are you okay?” Peter murmured, peeling himself away from Tony and hurrying over. Tony, too, marched over, coming to stand next to Peter.

“I’m fine,” Loki sniffed. “You two have a good night.”

“It would be a better night if you joined us,” Tony murmured, and for one moment Loki saw something there in the alpha’s eyes that pulled at him. Loki’s breath caught in his throat, and when Tony reached to caress Loki’s cheek, the omega caught his hand to hold it there. The moment was almost sweet, but it was interrupted abruptly when laughter filled the room and Sam and Clint easily pushed Loki aside to clasp Tony’s arm in greeting.

“Hey there!” Clint grinned. “Long time no see. Just thought we’d drop by. Seems like the party’s never over at Stark Manor.”

“Not with Tony around!” Sam grinned. “Hey Bruce, pour me a drink, huh?”

“Hey there,” Tony smiled weakly. “Yeah, help yourselves.”

He clapped the two of them on the back as they marched by and then moved to turn back to Loki, however he only managed to catch a glimpse of him retreating up the staircase. Peter gazed after him with an expression of hurt, and he almost took one step to follow, yet Sam pressed a drink into his hand and an arm around his shoulders, leading the omega towards the bar, and Peter weakly followed, gazing back over his shoulder towards the staircase.

That night, Loki curled up in the armchair with *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* in his lap, and he waited for Peter to arrive. Minutes passed, and then hours, but the door never opened for Peter to walk through. Eventually, Loki must’ve fallen asleep for he awoke abruptly in the armchair with the rays of morning sunlight in his face. Loki’s neck had a terrible crick in it, and he massaged it gently with his left hand as his right attempted to comb the snarls out of his hair. When he stalked into the bathroom, he found tear tracks down his cheeks and bags under his eyes. A good wash of his face only did so much and Loki still looked a mess, so he curled up in bed and pretended to be sick.

It must’ve been ten o’clock when the door softly opened and Peter peered in.

“Loki?” He hissed softly. “Are you awake?”

“I don’t feel well,” Loki mumbled, refusing to turn over. Peter crept in and came around the bed, gasping softly when he saw the state of the other omega. Peter held the back of his hand to Loki’s forehead and clucked his tongue softly.

“Love, you’re not warm but you don’t look well at all...” Peter murmured. “Have you eaten?”

“No,” Loki mumbled. “Not hungry.”

“I don’t care, I’m bringing you warm broth,” Peter murmured, stroking Loki’s hair. “And you’re going to eat all of it, okay?”

Loki simply grunted, though he couldn’t help grinning to himself when Peter scampered away. He came back a few minutes later with a tray filled with rich oat bread, steaming broth, and tea. He

curled up in bed next to Loki, who groaned dramatically, and began to gently try to nurse him to health.

"I sent word to your mother," Peter murmured. "Shuri was here this morning. That's why I took so long to come in. I thought your mother should know if you're ill. I know how much she loves you, and you her."

"Oh," Loki murmured, blinking at Peter. "That's... very kind."

"Of course, I love you," Peter smiled gently, smoothing back Loki's hair. "I will always take care of you. That's my place, to care for you."

"Peter, you don't have to care for me," Loki murmured, chewing his lip as the boy spooned him a bit more soup. "You're... you're too good. You deserve... deserve more from life. I, uh, I notice how close you are with Tony."

"He's a good friend," Peter nodded.

"A friend, yes..." Loki murmured.

"He misses you," Peter murmured. "I think he cares for you. He often asks me about love, relationships, I think it's because of you."

"I'm not certain that's why," Loki murmured softly. "Peter, never doubt that I love you, alright? Never doubt that I care for you, no matter what. But... but I give you my blessing, if that's what you want."

"Your blessing?" Peter chuckled. "What for?"

"For you and Tony," Loki sighed. "You're such a good person. You deserve to be happy."

"I am happy, Loki," Peter murmured. "I've never been happier. I will admit that Tony... Tony is attentive, and smart, and attractive, he lets me be someone I've always wanted to be..."

"I think I'd better rest," Loki murmured suddenly. "Would you like to... to cuddle? Just for a little while?"

"Sure," Peter nodded. "You just rest, love. Don't worry about a thing."

Loki curled up in Peter's lap, the younger omega gently stroking his hair and rubbing his back. The feeling was safe, incredible, and for these moments Loki felt truly loved. It was almost like it could last forever, yet the moment his breaths evened out he felt the bed dip, and when he opened his eyes, Peter was gone.

Loki didn't bother to leave the bedroom and get lunch, but he was utterly starving by the time dinner rolled around. He dressed up, as he always did at dinner, and began down the stairs to join the group. He froze, though, when he heard voices, and he peered from around the corner to see Sam, Clint, and Bucky standing there, speaking in hushed voices.

"I give them two weeks," Sam was saying. "Two weeks before they're engaged at least."

"Come on, man, don't talk like that," Bucky murmured. "You know Peter and Loki are involved."

"You saw Peter and Tony today," Sam chuckled. "You really think Peter is sticking with Loki after that?"

“Well, yes, if Peter likes omegas then the likelihood of him marrying an alpha is rather small,” Bucky’s voice rolled with sarcasm.

“Does he though?” Sam chuckled. “I mean honestly have you seen any signs that Loki and Peter even like each other? I mean be serious here. He and Tony were practically on top of each other today, and meanwhile Loki never seems to spend more than five minutes with that kid.”

“I give them a week,” Clint spoke up. “Loki and Peter, I mean. A week until they announce the whole thing was a scam and Loki goes running home to his manor with his tail between his legs. And even if he doesn’t run home to daddy, I highly doubt Peter will stick with him for long. Honestly, I think it’ll be very little time before Tony cancels his engagement to Loki and announces a new one to Peter. Those two are like two peas in a pod.”

“I heard him today,” Sam whispered. “Telling Tony that he wants to go out and be part of the world but all Loki does is sulk in his room. Sounds like Peter is none too happy with Loki’s loving... I heard he said Loki is a real scrubber.”

“He did not say that,” Bucky muttered. “Don’t go around spreading rumors.”

“Alright fine,” Sam sighed. “I don’t know, but I bet he was thinking it!”

“Wouldn’t doubt it,” Clint muttered. “I mean that isn’t wrong. I did hear him saying that it’s hard, you know, since he used to be Loki’s slave and now they’re lovers. Tony was asking him about that and Peter says Loki completely freed him, but that he almost wishes Loki hadn’t. He says if he was still Loki’s servant things would be less complicated now. Maybe he’s just too scared to move on from Loki.”

“Sounds about right,” Sam snorted. “Isn’t that a thing? Falling in love with someone’s captor?”

“I mean does Loki even truly love him? Or is it all an act, a fetish?” Clint shrugged.

“Loki is the type of have such perversities, maybe that’s what it’s been all along,” Sam agreed.

“Anyway, I, for one, will be glad when Loki is gone. It’d be different if he tried to fit in. But he doesn’t,” Clint sighed. “All he does is hide and look down his nose at the rest of us. As if he’s better than us even though he’s the one who’s been disowned.”

“Stop it, both of you! You’re just spreading rumors that may have no base in reality. You know how cautious I am of such things, and I’ve questioned Peter intensely about his previous and current relationship with Loki. This is no perversity. I am someone who knows of such things, and I truly do not believe Peter cares for him for such a reason. Peter is truly free, and these choices are his own. Do not fear for him. As for Loki... We can’t judge him so harshly. He set Peter free, and that says something! As for his pompous attitude,” Bucky sighed. “He might change. We don’t know.”

“If he does it’ll be too late to get Peter,” Clint muttered.

“I’m just saying, we cannot judge him so harshly,” Bucky sighed. “Yeah, it’s not like I like him either, but I know how damaging such judgements are. Got it?”

“Got it,” Sam sighed. “I’ll shut up.”

“Me too,” Clint agreed. “Sorry Bucky.”

Loki swallowed hard and retreated back upstairs, holding his hands around his stomach to press

away the pangs of hunger. He didn't need dinner after all, he decided. Food would only make him sick.

That night, Loki was nearly asleep when he felt the bed dip. Moments later, Peter curled up to his side. Loki's eyes fluttered open, and Peter smiled at him, kissing his lips.

"You feeling any better?" Peter murmured. "I missed you today. Oh, I've got something for you!"

Peter reached over and grabbed a letter. Loki recognized his mother's handwriting immediately, and his eyes lit up.

"What's it say?" Peter murmured.

"It's my mother!" Loki tried not to squeal in joy. "She's coming to visit, tomorrow! She says she hopes I feel better soon, and she... she loves me. She sent me dried rosemary from her garden. It smells like home... She's coming Peter, tomorrow!"

"Hm, I'm happy for you," Peter hummed, smiling against Loki's neck. "Now you need rest. Sleep, and in the morning you might be well."

"I love you," Loki murmured, swallowing hard as he pushed Peter's curls back from his cherub-like face and kissed his forehead. Peter smiled snuggling closer and humming softly in agreement as he fell asleep.

In the morning, Loki woke up early and he nearly danced around his room as he got dressed. He laced up his best corset and then pulled on a beautiful silk top. He tied his hair back in a bow and then headed downstairs to prepare tea and crumpets for Peter's breakfast. He was just taking the crumpets out of the oven when he spotted a woman's hat over the fence at the end of the yard, and his eyes lit up. He set the crumpets out to cool and then dashed out of the kitchen and down the stairs. His eyes were bright with joy, yet when he realized it was Shuri coming up the long driveway, his eyebrows drew together. Still, he shook off the odd feeling tickling at the back of his neck and he hurried up to Shuri, bowing to her.

"Miss Shuri," he murmured, ducking his head. "How can I help you? Is mother on her way? Shuri, is everything... is everything alright?"

It was only now that he was close that he saw what a mess Shuri's face was, and he frowned more deeply when he saw tears dripping freely down her cheeks. Startled, Loki pulled his handkerchief from his breast pocket and handed it to her, concerned.

"Is your mother alright, Shuri? Your brother?" Loki murmured. "What's wrong?"

"I'm sorry," Shuri sniffled, shaking her head and pressing her eyes shut. "I'm so sorry, Loki. I... I'm so sorry."

"What? What's happened?" Loki paled. When she only shook her head, panic leapt into her heart, and he gently shook her, trying to pull her out of her soft sobs as he demanded, "It is my father, isn't it? His heart... Shuri, it's my father isn't it?"

"I'm so sorry," Shuri repeated again, swallowing hard and finally forcing her tears back with a sniffle. "They came in the evening, after I had gone home. Thor, he wanted to do something for your father. Odin was just beginning to improve, and Thor wanted to do something nice for him. He... He took your father out for a ride. He put him in the carriage, Thor drove the horses. They were far down the lane when they saw them running from the manor. Bandits. They saw bandits running from the manor. They went home as quickly as they could. They went straight home but..."

but all the china was gone, and the silverware, and... Loki, I'm so sorry. Your mother tried to stop them. They found her with a fire poker still clasped in her hand. Loki, your mother, she's dead."

The proclamation was followed with silence. It stretched on, and on, and yet it was all that Loki could do to stay on his own two feet. The world had turned into an abstract painting, and he could hear a waterfall in his ears. For many moments, he was simply standing, but then he was on the ground, emptying his already barren stomach. He felt Shuri's hands on his back, but her voice was far away. He could barely see his hands trembling in the dirt, let alone yesterday's broth now splattered on the ground. It was only at long last that her voice registered, and then everything came rushing in all at once.

"Loki?" Shuri was demanding as she fiercely rubbed his back. "Can you hear me? I'm going to call for the doctor if you do not answer!"

"No I... I can hear you," Loki managed to speak, coughing twice more before he rubbed his silk shirt across his mouth and winced at the sickly color that came away on the fine material. "I apologize. I lost control. I... I'm sorry!"

Loki coughed again, yet nothing came up as he hacked and hacked. Yet when Shuri stood to get the doctor, Loki called her back and shook his head, his face nearly green.

"Please," Loki begged softly. "Get no one, please?"

"You're ill, I have to get Bruce," Shuri shook her head and moved to stand, yet she hesitated when Loki gazed after her with eyes so desperate that she could feel only pity and she gently knelt beside him, again beginning to rub his back.

"Did she suffer?" Loki begged softly, his eyes shining with tears that he would not let fall.

"No, I don't think so," Shuri murmured. "They had acquired a new type of weapon, a new handgun. It would have provided a... a quick death."

"Good," Loki's voice was just above a whisper. "Thank you for telling me. I apologize that I lost control. It was not appropriate. I... I must go. I must go to the manor. Please? May I go to the manor?"

"You can try," Shuri murmured gently. "I need to speak with Tony. Are you alright to go to the manor alone?"

"I will be, yes," Loki whispered. "I'm alright now. I apologize. I'm alright."

"I really think you should see the doctor first..." Shuri bit her lip. "You shouldn't be alone right now. I'll go fetch Bruce and--"

"No! No, please, I am alright," Loki stood, lifting his chin high, a picture of perfect composure. "You need not worry for me. I simply.... I forgot myself. I apologize. I must go, I... I must go the manor..."

"Loki, stop apologizing," Shuri frowned at him. "You've done nothing wrong. If you are so determined to go now then I will accompany you myself, alright? My business with Tony can wait. May I walk with you?"

"Yes, yes alright," Loki whispered. "Yes. Thank you. Thank you."

"Hush, you don't need to say anything," Shuri murmured. "I know."

She watched as Loki squared his shoulders, but when he stumbled slightly she reached out to help him, feeling his brow. He blinked hard, again pushing away any tears, and Shuri sighed, leading him down the road towards Odin Manor. They walked in silence, Loki's hand grasped tightly in Shuri's own. To an outsider, Loki might look detached, uncaring, but she could feel the way his hand trembled in her own, and she squeezed it as they finally approached the lane leading to Odin Manor.

There was a thick fog in the air, and it prickled at Loki's skin. He didn't feel like himself. He was cold, but it wasn't because of the weather. He was shivering, but it wasn't because of the temperature. As they approached the steps, he stumbled but then held himself straight again, and he took the steps one at the time.

"I wish to be alone now," Loki whispered. "Please Shuri?"

"I'll leave you here, if that's what you wish," Shuri nodded. "I will see you again soon, Loki. Yes? You know she loved you, and she lives on in your heart and mine. I will always be here, Loki, if you need someone."

He could only nod once, watching as she disappeared around the manor. He pulled the doorbell and listened to its loud bong. For a moment, it was like no one was home, but then Loki was shocked when the door was pulled open. To his shock, he was met with Thor looking an awful mess.

His hair was in shambles, and he appeared to wear yesterday's clothes which were rumpled and dirty. His face was streaked with dirt and tears, and his hands shook, but when he saw Loki his eyes widened.

"Brother," Thor murmured. "I... You cannot be here."

"Our mother is dead, and this is the greeting I receive?" Loki spat, instantly angry. "Shuri told me! Could you not come and tell me the news yourself, brother?"

"I sent her," Thor whispered, pressing his eyes shut. "If father knew I had sent her we would both be in danger. I'm sorry, but you cannot be here. He is not in his right mind. He will have you hurt. He will have you sent away."

"Such a good son, always doing what daddy wants. Odin's little golden boy," Loki spat, mocking, and Thor's eyes flashed.

"Shut up, brother, I mourn her the same as you," Thor growled softly. "You think you alone loved mother? You may have been her omega son, but I had her trust!"

"Trust? Was that her last expression? Trust? When you let her die?" Loki spat, his eyes flashing.

"And what help were you?" Thor spat right back. "You left! You know not what it's been like here since you ran away! You could have stayed here, could have changed and stayed and been here for her, but you ran away to Stark Manor!"

"Who banished me from the house? Who gave me the ultimatum of torture or a life as a refugee? Who forced me from my home?!" Loki cried. "You think yourself so high and mighty? You are nothing but a hypocrite and a coward hiding behind your father's commands!"

"I have a duty to this family and these lands!" Thor cried. "A duty you have left for a charmed life on the run! Of course you understand nothing of duty!"

“I understand everything that you never will,” Loki spat. “Odinson.”

Loki flinched when Thor grabbed his shirt in two fists and shook him hard, before releasing the omega abruptly.

“You must go,” Thor spoke again, swallowing hard. “Please Loki. I don’t want to fight you. I want you to be safe, and it is not safe here for you.”

“What of the funeral?” Loki swallowed hard. “Am I not to attend my own mother’s funeral?”

“I am truly sorry, but you cannot,” Thor whispered. “I am sorry, Loki, but you are not of this family anymore. Father would have you restrained if you tried to come.”

“So that’s it then?” Loki spat. “That’s it? I am told of her death and that is all?”

“I’m sorry,” Thor whispered. “Truly.”

“At least let me see her body! Please?” Loki begged suddenly, looking in past the door. Thor caught his shoulder before Loki could dash in, and he struggled in his brother’s grip. “I wish to see her body! I want to see my mother! Please, just one more time, I want to see my mother!”

“Loki, stop it, you have to go!” Thor cried, nearly losing his grip on his trembling, struggling brother.

“I want to see her!” Loki cried. “Let me go! I just want to see my mother one more time!”

“Stop it!” Loki blinked away tears as he was suddenly struck across the face, and he stared at Thor in shock as the alpha stared down at his own hand which was now as red as Loki’s cheek. “Please, Loki, please go, before he sees you. Please.”

Loki stood up straighter, wiped his cheeks, and then nodded once, trying not to tremble.

“I’m sorry, brother,” Thor whispered. “I’m so sorry.”

“You are no brother of mine,” Loki spat. And with that, he turned on his heel and marched with a straight back down the drive until he was around the curve in the road. He remained standing there for several long moments, completely stiff, completely still, until he heard a bird singing somewhere far up in the trees. It was only a number of seconds later that Loki crumpled to the ground, curled into a tight ball, and cried and cried until the dirt around him was nothing more than mud painted with teardrops.

I'm a machine (Should I pretend that you didn't exist?)

An emotional being (Should I act like you're somebody I miss?)

Since I was a teen (A velvet glove around an iron fist)

Cut my feelings off clean (If you wanna survive, then ignorance is bliss)

Thank you all so much for your long comments! I've been having a ton of fun reading them and they definitely help me think more in depth about the characters. Also thank you to lokislonleylady for helping me come up with some ideas for plot and character reactions.

We're about to enter a new chapter in Loki's life, and I'm excited for his journey to start. There's a lot more Loki!whump of a different kind, and all of the characters are going to be going through a journey of self discovery so I'm very excited for that to start...

Too Afraid

Chapter Notes

Warning for some quickly, sort of implied sexual manipulation near the end of this chapter. Thank you to lokislonleyleady for keeping with this story, helping to edit, and give ideas!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

I wanna change, but I don't know how

I've been trying to turn my life around

I guess I didn't know if I was happy

Been feeling like I don't belong, and I see

Nothing's gonna change the way I feel

I can't pretend, I've reached an end

It was amazing how everything in your life could be falling apart, and yet the world still carries on around you. This sentiment rattled around Loki's mind as he stepped foot in Stark Manor, the sound of laughter reaching his ears. The group of renegades were having some sort of meeting this morning, and no matter how quiet Loki tried to be when he closed the front door, Peter's head still poked out of the room.

"There you are!" Peter broke into a smile, hurrying over and taking Loki's coat. "I was worried about you! Did you go to see your mother?"

"Have you spoken to Shuri?" Loki murmured, and Peter's eyebrows drew together as he frowned lightly.

"No, why?" He murmured.

"No reason. Peter, you should go enjoy your meeting. I'm going upstairs," Loki moved to turn away, yet Peter caught his arm and pressed a long kiss against his lips.

"I think I'll spend this afternoon with you," Peter murmured. "I don't know why, but I just feel like I should, you know? I don't know why. It's just an odd feeling. Tony wishes you'd join the meeting, but I know you don't like to. Tony has been missing you, he thinks you're avoiding him. I'm kind of worried about him actually. He keeps staring at his bar like he wants to start drinking again and... Well I think maybe it would get better if you talked to him."

"Peter, you know it isn't me who he wants," Loki finally sighed. He pushed one hand through Peter's curls, swallowing hard as he cupped his other hand to Peter's cheek. "And I've accepted that. And if you want him too, then that's okay. I've never met anyone like you, Peter. You're so good, even in the face of cruelty you manage to be so good. You deserve the best, Peter, better than anyone. You know I tried so hard for you... But I will never be like you. I've come to accept that. None can be like you, you will outshine them all. You deserve the world, and someone who can

give you everything. Tony has much to offer.”

“Loki, where’s all this coming from?” Peter frowned, biting his lip. “I love you, Loki. I’m sorry, I know I’ve been busy, it’s just Tony hasn’t been doing well and I’ve been trying to keep him from getting really sick. If you’d just talk to him...”

“He doesn’t need me,” Loki murmured. “You’re everything this world needs, everything Tony needs. No matter what happens, Peter, never doubt that I love you with all my heart. You are everything good about this world. I love you so much.”

Loki pulled Peter into his arms, hiccuping softly and pressing his eyes shut as tears dribbled down his cheeks. He suppressed a soft sob as he held Peter close, one hand buried in Peter’s soft curls. The younger omega blinked, gently holding Loki as well, though his voice was confused as he whispered, “I love you too, Loki... But what is going to happen? Please talk to me Loki? What’s going on? What’s wrong, love? Something’s happened, I can feel it...”

“Hush, maybe later okay? Can we go upstairs, please? Can we go up to cuddle, just for a little while?”

“Of course,” Peter murmured, slipped his hand around Loki’s waist and studying him closely. “Of course we can, but I’m worried about you, love. Please, talk to me, tell me what’s going on.”

“Not right now,” Loki shook his head, pressing a kiss into Peter’s hair. “I’m okay, darling. I want you, love. I just want to feel close to you now. I need something, I need you.”

“Loki, are you certain now is a good time? I’m really concerned about you,” Peter stopped them halfway up the stairs and studied Loki carefully. Before he could get too good of a look, Loki swept him into his arms and kissed him deeply, his tongue running along Peter’s bottom lip.

Peter moaned softly, nipping at Loki before his lips parted and allowed Loki entrance. When Loki’s hands wandered from Peter’s shoulders, lower and lower, the younger omega moaned softly. He braced himself against the wall and curled his legs around Loki’s waist as he knew his lover liked. They kissed there for several moments, the thrill of the idea of being caught shooting through Peter. Just as he was going to further question Loki, his lover wrapped his arms securely around Peter and he began to carry him up the stairs. Shocked, Peter tucked his legs more tightly around Loki’s waist and clutched his shoulder until they arrived in their room and Loki gently deposited Peter on the bed.

“You’re sure?” Peter murmured, pressing a hand to Loki’s chest as the older omega crawled on top of him, a knee on either side of Peter’s waist. “You’re certain you want to do this now? You’re okay?”

“Please?” Loki begged softly. “Please, can I do this? Please?”

“You’re crying.”

“I want you, please Peter. Please don’t stop this now, unless you don’t... don’t want it, and that’s okay, of course! I just... I’m okay, I promise,” Loki swallowed hard, flinching as Peter reached up to wipe his tears.

“I always want you,” Peter murmured. “Always, Loki.”

And so Loki leaned down for more kisses, the two omegas tangling themselves in the sheets. Their love was always tender, teasing, mischievous, and left nothing to be desired. This time was no different, and when they had both finished, they flopped back onto the bed together, cuddled in

each other's arms. Loki's right hand tucked into Peter's curls, while Peter's arms encircled Loki as he pressed kisses against the bonding gland on Loki's neck.

"I love you," Peter murmured between kisses.

"I love you too, never doubt that," Loki murmured, smiling as he gazed tenderly down at the boy. "You should rest, sleep. I will hold you until you fall asleep. Never doubt that I love you. You are so good, and you will change the world one day. You're the most precious person on this planet, I am so proud of you. You're wonderful, Peter, you're everything."

Peter hummed softly, murmuring a soft comment of love against Loki's neck as he allowed himself to drift off, Loki's hand gently petting his hair. Loki could tell the moment Peter fell into a deep sleep, his breaths even and his lips parted slightly. For a long moment, Loki simply admired his beauty. There was no one like Peter, no one as smart, as kind, as good, as clever, as beautiful, and Loki pressed a tender kiss against the omega's forehead.

"I will always love you," Loki whispered. "But you need something better than me. You will be happy, and safe. I love you so much..."

Loki sniffled, pressing one more kiss against the top of his head before he smoothed Peter's hair back and then stood, pulling his clothes on and writing out a letter which he left at the end of Peter's bed.

'Peter, When you read this letter I will be far from here. I'm going to stay with a friend. It is better we remain apart. You have a beautiful future ahead of you with Tony. Never think I don't love you. You are everything to me, and I loved Tony as well, and it is for this reason that I leave you both. You are made for each other, and I know I only pull you both away from greatness. I want only happiness for the both of you. I know you will both prosper with me gone. You always wanted an alpha with money, and Tony will give you the life you always dreamed of and more. You will invent a better world. You are destined for such great things, Peter, never let anyone tell you otherwise. You are the best person I have ever known. Give Tony my love and tell him that I wish him only the best. I know you'll both make the world beautiful together. Much love, Loki.'

Loki left through the back door to ensure that no one would notice his disappearance, and he allowed himself a long moment to appreciate Stark Manor. He used to dream about living here with Tony, and then with Peter, but he knew those dreams were foolish, and for the first time he felt as if this decision was unselfish. Finally, he was putting another first. In this moment he was losing the two people he loved above all others, but he was making this choice for their happiness. They were more important.

"I love you both," Loki whispered into the wind. "Much happiness, to both of you. Goodbye. Goodbye Tony. Goodbye Peter. Goodbye, mother. I... I hope I've made you proud."

Loki pressed his eyes shut, wiping his cheeks quickly before he turned and nearly ran into Tony who was just coming around the corner.

"Whoa!" He chuckled slightly, his face going from an ashen sort of pale to beaming within moments. "Loki, where are you sneaking off to, hm?"

"I'm not sneaking," Loki huffed, hands on his hips.

"You're using the servant's door, you're sneaking," Tony chuckled. "I've known you too long for that. So I ask again, where are you sneaking off to? Can I join you? This meeting is incredibly dull. It's so dull, you know, that I actually went to feed the horses! Horses, can you imagine?"

"I'm going for a walk, actually," Loki swallowed, stuffing his hands in his pockets.

"Ah, may I join you?" Tony asked hopefully, but Loki ducked away from his reaching hands.

"I wish to walk alone," Loki sniffed. "Anyway, why walk with me now? You've been avoiding me for the past days."

"Well frankly I'd walk with anyone to avoid this meeting, but you in particular. Figured we could go down to the river? Or through that glen in the woods? Loki, I need to speak with you, alright? It's about our engagement..."

"I have to go," Loki immediately pulled away. "Now. I just need to be alone for a while."

"But Loki--"

"Goodbye Tony," Loki whispered. "I love you."

Tony blinked, baffled as Loki quickly made his way down the driveway, and he rubbed the back of his neck in confusion.

"I'll have food for you when you come back!" Tony called after him. "Might even help Jarvis make it! Actually that's not true, but Jarvis makes excellent food!"

Loki simply pressed his eyes shut and walked more quickly down the lane.

London was filled with fine houses, but there might be none more elaborate than En Dwi Gast's. The marble staircase was lined with statuary, and Loki felt like the topiary were watching him as he knocked with the golden lion head door knockers. All was silent for a moment, before the door was pulled open by a tall, apparently unimpressed beta.

"Gast?" The beta drawled loudly into the manor, and moments later En Dwi pranced into view, beaming when he spotted Loki. He pulled the omega into his arms and placed a wet kiss on either of his cheeks.

"Lo-Lo, darling! I knew you'd, uh, come around eventually!" Gast beamed, holding Loki at arms length. "What brings you to my most humble abode, my dear?"

"You said you'd have an open room for me?" Loki murmured, and he flinched when Gast shook him happily.

"Of course!" He beamed. "Always for you, my love! What are you doing standing in the doorway, anyway, darling? Come come, we don't leave our guests standing in the doorway now do we Topaz?"

Topaz simply rolled her eyes and grunted as Gast wrapped a snug arm around Loki's shoulder and began to lead him into the house.

"Now, darling, you came at such a lovely time! I was just doing business with my favorite alpha! We'll finish up there and then I'll show you our room!" Gast beamed.

"Our room?" Loki blinked. "You said you had an open room."

"Well yes, my room is always open to you, hm?" Gast giggled childishly and hit Loki on his rump. "Best room in the house!"

“You’re so kind,” Loki drawled slowly. “En Dwi.”

“Ah ah ah, oof!” Gast turned Loki abruptly and waggled a finger in his face. “En Dwi, so complicated hm? Here I think a much nicer name would be Grandmaster, don’t you think? Has a much nicer ring to it!”

“Yes Grandmaster,” Loki bit out, wincing when Gast patted his left cheek twice.

“There we go,” he beamed, leading Loki towards an extravagant office draped in golden velvet. “Much better. Now come, Lo-Lo! Here she is, my absolute favorite! Valkyrie, this is my darling little Lo-Lo!”

“Loki,” the alpha nodded once, turning, and Loki blinked in surprise. She didn’t look familiar at all, and yet her expression was one of utter boredom, lacking any interest or surprise.

“Do you two know each other?” Gast blinked, looking between them, yet Loki shook his head.

“I don’t believe so,” he murmured.

“Ah well,” Gast beamed, pulling Loki onto his lap as he sat across from her at a desk. “So, these two, tell me more! How much are we talking?”

“Here are the prices, and here’s what they’re each asking,” Valkyrie slid a paper across the table, and the Grandmaster nodded once.

“That one is absolutely awful, isn’t he? Just awful.... Just look at that hair!” Gast shivered. “But the going rate... where was he trained, hm?”

“That one was Oxford’s School,” Valkyrie murmured.

“Oxford’s school, hm? A charity case? I could do some charity for the poor boy... And that one? She is pretty.... that red hair, oh and those eyes! Isn’t she pretty Lo-Lo? Lo-Lo makes love to omegas too so he knows a pretty one when he sees it!” Gast beamed, squeezing Loki’s shoulder. “What do you think? So expensive though...”

“She was trained in Russia,” Valkyrie drawled. “But if you don’t like the cost...”

“No no, I didn’t say that did I? No, I’ll take both of them. They start rehearsals tomorrow! Oh Topaz, transfer the money? Where did she go... You know, I do like these deals!”

“Glad you like them,” Valkyrie crossed her arms. “The money?”

“Yes yes, where did she go? Excuse me, dears...”

Loki stood to allow Gast to scamper away, and he crossed his arms, glaring at Valkyrie.

“How do you know my name?” Loki demanded immediately.

“I know lots of things,” she shrugged, kicking her legs up on the table. “That one happens to be a particularly long story, and I don’t feel like telling it.”

“So, what, you sell omegas?” Loki glared, but Valkyrie simply rolled her eyes.

“Sell omegas? Please! I am a talent scout. I find dancers for his show. They’re all looking for work and I set them up with good connections. Whatever else they do for Gast is none of my business. If you’re looking for someone to sell you that’s your alpha,” Valkyrie snorted and hooked a thumb

towards an alpha seated across the hall. He wore a fine silk scarf around his neck which he fiddled with now and then, and Loki immediately didn't like him. He looked up when a large coin purse was plopped on the table, and Valkyrie grinned, grabbing it as she murmured, "Now I just got paid and I have somewhere very important to be. Bye..."

"I'll walk you out," Gast beamed. "Be right back, darling!"

Loki hummed, turning to watch the two of them disappear down the hall, yet a nose pressed to his neck and startled Loki so much that he spun and slapped the person behind him.

"Feisty, aren't you?" The alpha muttered, holding his cheek with pouty lips, before his expression turned to a slight grin and he murmured, "I like it... Alpha Hammer, at your service! And you are?"

"Not available," Loki spat, taking a step back from the alpha with the silk scarf who was now in a low bow. Hammer frowned and stood up, pulling Loki into his arms before the omega could stop him.

"Come now," the alpha pouted again. "Don't be like that, love! Are you looking for work? Don't worry, I'll buy you nice things and you don't even have to repay me, hm? How's this sound? You, me, tonight, fine wine along the shore..."

"Ah, I see you've met my darling Lo-Lo!"

Hammer immediately released Loki, who glared, dusted himself off, and tucked himself under Gast's outstretched arm.

"He is a dear, isn't he?" Gast beamed, pressing a kiss into Loki's hair. "You know, I was just telling Valkyrie how much I love Lo-Lo! He's mine, you know, and any alpha who looks at him without my permission will become oh so familiar with the fish at the bottom of London Bay, yes? Catch my... drift?"

Hammer swallowed hard and looked at the ground.

"Perhaps we shall continue our business in the other room, yes? I'm sorry, Lo-Lo, off you go! There are some sweets for you in the dining room! Take as many as you want, but don't forget to, uh, watch your figure!" Gast beamed, patting Loki's rump twice before taking Hammer's arm and leading him away. Loki looked up to see Topaz gazing into the room, bored, and he glared, straightened his clothes, and then marched out of the room with as much dignity as he could muster. She didn't so much as turn her head to give him any mind.

"There's still no sign of him? No word?"

"Nothing. Someone claims they say him at the train station heading toward London, but after that the trail falls flat. I'm sorry..."

"Well keep looking! We have to find him... We don't know what he could do..."

"Have you considered that he doesn't want to be found? He left for a reason, Tony. He may not want to be found."

"He's out there, and he could be hurt! Who knows what kind of frame of mind he's in! His mother died! Did you not hear what Shuri said? His mother died! And then he up and left! If only I'd

known this afternoon... If only I'd known, I never would've let him go... God, I need another drink. Steve, can you hand me that champagne?"

"Don't be so hard on yourself," Steve murmured, patting Tony's shoulder but refusing to hand over the bottle. "You didn't know. We'll keep looking."

"I want to join the hunt," Tony insisted suddenly, grabbing at the table to help himself stand. "I want to go!"

"Tony, you can hardly stand, you can't help us look. Look, I'm putting this champagne away, alright? No more. You hear me?"

"Yeah yeah, I'm fine. Please keep looking? Please?"

"We won't give up," Steve promised, patting his arm. "You just take care of yourself, alright?"

Tony simply grunted, watching as Steve marched from the room all decked in lace. Tony's eyes fell upon the feast he'd had Jarvis prepare, simply staring at it for several long moments, before he snatched the bouquet of roses and tossed it against the wall with a shout of frustration. He hissed when he looked down and spotted a soft trickle of red on his finger, and he pressed a red napkin to the wound.

"Damn thorns," Tony muttered. "Damn roses."

He probably would've gone on cursing, but his eyes then fell upon the little green box placed in the center of the table. He swallowed hard as he reached out to flip the box open and stare at his reflection in the sparkling diamond seated upon the golden ring. It was beautiful, expensive, but no less empty a promise than what was twisting in his gut right now. Tony snapped the little box shut and stumbled to his feet, snatching the champagne bottle and gulping it down until there was nothing left but the soft fizzle upon his tongue.

Stumbling, Tony managed to make his way over to the window where he sat, his hand pressed against the glass.

"Tony?"

The soft voice startled him, and Tony spun, swallowing hard when Peter timidly crept into the room.

"There's no word?" He murmured, wrapping his arms around himself. "Nothing?"

"What do you think?" Tony snapped, before pressing his lips shut and murmuring a soft apology.

"It's okay," Peter murmured. "I feel the same way. I was so stupid! I should've known something was wrong! I did know something was wrong! I just.... I'm so stupid..."

"You're not," Tony slurred, pulling Peter into his arms. "You're.... Brilliant."

"I don't have to be brilliant to know you should be in bed," Peter whispered, sighing softly. "I'll stay up waiting for him. You get to bed, okay? Or at least rest. Come on, please Tony?"

"I'll... I'll rest," Tony nodded once, curling up right there on the window seat. "But wake me up! The moment he comes home wake me up!"

"I will, Tony," Peter promised, pressing his eyes shut. "The moment he comes home."

But hours turned into days which dragged into weeks, and still there was no sign of Loki. No matter how hard Peter, Bruce, and Rhodey tried, there was no keeping Tony from his drinks. Peter was no less miserable, but he dealt with his problems by throwing himself into his work. Steve had returned to his post in London, leaving Bucky to help Peter search for any sign of Loki. He was just one among dozens of omegas going missing, yet no matter how Tony implored the police service, it seemed that law enforcement had no luck in solving the disappearances. In fact, it wasn't until two months later when a letter arrived in the mail, and Peter's heart soared when he saw who it was from: Loki.

Joyously, Peter dashed inside, waving the letter about and drawing the attention of Sam and Bucky who were currently stretched out over a map of London.

"Son of a... You finally heard from him? What's it say, kid? Well hurry up, read it!" Sam started, a grin appearing on his face as Peter tore the letter open.

"He's... yeah he's okay, he's... What?" Peter blinked, frowning.

"What is it?" Bucky murmured, eyebrows drawing together.

"Is he alright?" Sam frowned, growing concerned. Peter had learned that both Sam and Clint had been involved with Loki for one night stands in the past, but had evidently not understood that Loki wasn't looking for anything long term. This had left both alphas heartbroken and angry. Still, despite any distaste they'd had for Loki, the omega's disappearance had worried Clint and Sam no less than anyone else, and he moved to peer over Peter's shoulder.

"Yeah I guess," Peter bit his lip. "He said he found out we've been looking for him, and he says he's sorry that he caused us to worry. He says he's with the Grandmaster, and they he doesn't wish to be disturbed. He said..." Peter swallowed hard, sniffing slightly. "He said he hopes I'm doing well with Tony... He says he's happy there, and doesn't want to come home. He says he left so I could be happy..."

"Hey, kid," Sam murmured, moving to put an arm around him. "Long as he's okay, yeah? Why don't you go tell Tony, okay? He might be doing better today. He's playing chess with Rhodey. Rhodey and Bruce took all his drinks again last night so..."

"Thanks, yeah, thank you I'll go talk to him.... Why would Loki go to the Grandmaster, though, don't they hate each other? It says... it says he doesn't want to be disturbed. What if he's in trouble? What if he was forced to write this?" Peter chewed on his lip. "Do you really think he's there willingly?"

"I'll dig around, see if I can find out, promise," Bucky smiled, squeezing Peter's shoulder. "Trust me, if he's there unwillingly I'll find out about it."

"Thanks," Peter smiled, squeezing Bucky's hand. "You're amazing..."

"If only everyone else thought so," Bucky chuckled softly. "Okay, go on now, Tony needs to hear the news."

Peter nodded, scurrying off with letter in hand. Indeed, he found Tony playing chess with Rhodey in the library, and the two alphas looked up in surprise when Peter came in. Tony was looking a little better for wear with fresh clothes, washed hair, and a bowl of grapes at his side. Rhodey smiled kindly at Peter when the omega entered, and he nodded for Peter to speak.

"Colonel, Lord Stark, I have news about Loki," Peter murmured, hurrying over to give the letter to

Tony, who snatched it away so fast it almost ripped. His eyes narrowed when he finished reading it, looking up in Peter and frowning deeply.

“Gast’s place?” Tony frowned. “What’s he doing there?”

“I don’t know,” Peter murmured. “Bucky is going to find out. He’s going to make sure Loki is there willingly and everything.”

“No! No that isn’t acceptable!” Tony spat, standing up and nearly toppling over when the blood rushed from his head. “You and I, we have to contact him and bring him home! We need to go there, now, not Bucky! We need to bring him home!”

“Tony,” Rhodey murmured softly, reaching across the table to lay a steadying hand on his arm, gently pulling him back into his chair. “Let Bucky take care of it, alright? If Loki doesn’t want to come here, you can’t force him. You know he has a long history with Gast...”

“Yes, a bad history,” Tony spat. “There’s no way he wants to be there. He used to run around trying to tell everyone what scum Gast is and of course no one believed Loki, except myself and Thor. Gast treated the whole thing like a silly inconvenience, and eventually Loki realized no one would listen and he gave up, but there is no way he’s there because he wants to be. I want him home, safe!”

“Tony, please,” Peter murmured. “So do I, more than anything, but maybe we should let Bucky see. Please? If Loki really doesn’t want to be contacted he won’t appreciate us showing up there. Bucky can do things so quietly no one will ever know he was investigating, okay? I trust him, don’t you?”

“I trust myself,” Tony crossed his arms. “But... but fine. Peter, if that’s what you think best then... then I’ll trust you. You, not Bucky.”

“Why not Bucky?” Peter murmured.

“I have my reasons,” Tony muttered. “But I’ll trust your judgement. But Bucky needs to go now. Right now. Right now or I’m going myself.”

“I am going now,” the door opened to reveal Bucky dressed in London street clothes. “I was just coming to say my goodbyes. I’ll try to be home by tomorrow, alright? I’ll make sure he’s safe, I promise.”

“You’d better,” Tony growled. “Make sure he’s safe, and happy, and... and... and tell him he’s being ridiculous and he should come home. Peter and I aren’t even... we haven’t even... Please, make sure he knows he’s always welcome here. He can always come here. Please?”

“I’ll make sure he’s safe,” Bucky murmured. “Take care of yourself while I’m gone, alright?”

“We all look forward to your safe return,” Rhodey murmured gently. “Take care, Barnes.”

Bucky nodded, shouldering a small sack on his back and then slipping from the room, leaving Tony to put his head in his hands.

“I just don’t understand,” Tony murmured. “Peter, I thought he loved you. Why would he leave for Gast? I thought... he and I, we... I thought he and I would be okay. I thought he’d stay here, safe. I thought he wouldn’t leave you.”

“I thought that too,” Peter murmured. “But... but if he’s happy there then... then that’s what

matters. As long as he's happy."

"But how can he be happy with Gast?" Tony wrung his hands. "Why wouldn't he want to be here, where it's safe?"

"You can't go around thinking you have to protect everyone, Tony," Peter murmured. "I loved Loki, and I miss him so much, but... But he has to be his own person. You and I, we can't control him. He's so smart, Tony, so smart. Not for an omega, for anyone, and... and maybe he didn't want your protection, or mine. I don't know. I just... I just hope he's okay."

"Me too," Tony murmured. "Me too."

Bucky returned in two days time, during which Tony made an extra effort to drink coffee instead of alcohol. Peter was by his side almost every moment, supporting him and distracting him with the finishing touches on their flying machine. They were outside working on it when Peter spotted Bucky coming up the driveway, and he beamed, standing and dashing over. He frowned when he realized Loki was nowhere to be found and Bucky didn't look altogether happy.

"Well?" Tony demanded, coming up alongside Peter. "You find him?"

"Yes, I did. I spoke with him," Bucky sighed softly. "And he gave me strict instructions that no one is to contact him again. He was very angry that I tried, but I think he was thankful that I spoke with him in the night so that no one was the wiser that I'd visited. He, uh, he claims he is happy and that he finally feels he's found his final home. He sends his wishes for both of you to be very happy as well. He's fully convinced that you're both better off without him. I tried to explain how much you both care about him, and he was instant that he cares no less about you, and he claims that's why he left. He wanted me to, uh, to tell you both that he loves you, and he left because he believes you'll thrive with him gone. He fully believes he was ruining both of your lives, and that you'll be much happier together, without him."

"But... But we love him," Peter murmured, his voice just above a whisper. "Do you truly believe he's happier now?"

"I believe he wants to think so," Bucky murmured, sighing softly. "And that he wants you to think so. I'll keep my opinion to myself, thanks."

"And that's it?" Tony blinked, his mouth setting in a firm line. "He's not coming back? He's just gone? For good? Just like that?"

"I'm sorry Tony," Bucky sighed. "I tried to tell him how much you miss him. I think he didn't believe me."

Tony swallowed once, nodded, and then turned away, beginning to march towards the house.

"Tony?" Peter frowned, falling into step beside him. "Tony what are you doing? Where are you going?"

"I..." Tony faltered, running one hand through his hair and grasping at the back of it. "I... I'm going inside, I hadn't gotten beyond that but I did order for a new shipment of scotch so..."

"No, no way, not again," Peter caught his arm, spinning Tony with a surprising amount of strength. "No. If Loki wants so much to believe that we're in love, together, then so be it. You and I, we're going on a date."

"A what?" Tony blinked.

“A date? You know, when people go out to dinner, talk about their feelings, except we’ll probably talk about motors and gadgets...”

“Yes, I know what a date is,” Tony rolled his eyes. “But Peter, you want to go on a date with me?”

“I love Loki, so much, but right now I don’t know what to believe anymore, okay? And I think we both need a night out and anyway...” Peter swallowed, a hand landing nervously at the back of his neck. “This is how it’s supposed to be, right? An alpha and an omega going out together and... and being normal. It’s what I was always told, my whole life. I’m an omega, so I marry an alpha. That’s normal, that’s right, and I guess... I guess I was just being foolish this whole time. Loki is right. This is what I’ve always... always wanted, and needed, and I guess... I guess I just needed his push to... to finally accept that.”

“Peter,” Tony frowned, turning and placing a hand on his shoulder. “I won’t take you on a date because you think you’re supposed to date an alpha just because you’re an omega.”

“Then do it because we like each other,” Peter murmured. “Or because we get along. You’ve been treating me like your omega for weeks now anyway. Please?”

“Well,” Tony hesitated, biting his lip before he slowly nodded once. “Fine, on one condition.”

“What’s that?” Peter murmured.

“I get a kiss at the end,” Tony grinned. “If you want.”

“What else are dates for?” Peter grinned. “So I guess that means I’ll see you tonight, my love.”

Bucky watched the two of them disappear into the sitting room, and it was only once the door was securely closed that he stepped over to one of the communication devices. He waited until the static finished crackling before he spoke.

“Steve?” Bucky’s voice was soft, urgent. “We need to talk. Meet me at Weston’s Pond tonight, 23:00, okay? See you there.”

London was far, but the ride passed quick enough in Tony’s car. He was pressed in a pressed maroon suit made to match the lace popping out of the top of Peter’s flowing top. They spoke about mechanics, and Jules Verne, and new steps for omegas in America. The restaurant Tony had chosen appeared on the outside to be a hole in the wall, but inside everything was red velvet, clinking wine glasses, and soft music from the live band. They were led to a private booth in the back, Peter’s spine tingling with the wealth practically seeping out of the walls.

Tony let Peter order for them, and he chose a French dish he could hardly pronounce and cocktails so low in alcohol he felt confident that Tony could drive them home. Their conversation was merry all through dinner, and the food was like nothing Peter had ever tasted. This was everything and more than he had ever dreamed of, everything his school had instructed him to expect in life, and yet he didn’t understand why he had to keep pushing back the urge to shiver whenever Tony’s arm slid around his shoulders.

Finally the dinner pulling to a close, the two of them full of good food and comfortably snuggled in the velvet booth, the conversation never growing dull. Peter’s head ended up pillowed against Tony’s chest, yet the odd shiver wouldn’t leave him alone, and so Tony took off his own coat to wrap around Peter’s shoulders. It didn’t help, but Peter pretended like it did.

“So how was all this?” Tony murmured softly, pressing a kiss into Peter’s hair.

“Yeah, yeah, no, it was great,” Peter murmured, swallowing hard. “I’ve ever met an alpha like you. I can see why Loki loved you. You’re kind, a gentleman, and yet I think your name should really be Lord Snark.”

“Shut up,” Tony chuckled softly, ruffling Peter’s hair. “So you had a good time?”

“The best,” Peter murmured, turning his face up to Tony. “I had the best time...”

Peter swallowed hard as Tony pushed a lock of curly hair behind his ear, smiling gently and leaning a little closer.

“I’d give everything to you to be happy, Peter,” Tony promised softly. “I had the best time, too.”

For one moment, all Peter could see were the little flecks of black in Tony’s brown eyes, and then his lips were pressed to Peter’s. The kiss was warm, soft, and incredibly tender. In all definitions, it should have been perfect. And so, it made absolutely no sense when Peter suddenly pushed him away, panting, his eyes wide.

“Peter, are you okay?” Tony asked immediately, the warmth in his eyes replaced with concern.

“No,” Peter murmured, his eyebrows drawing together sharply. “No, this isn’t right. I’ve kissed alphas before, so many times, but this time was supposed to be different. This time... this time it was you.”

“What do you mean?” Tony murmured, his tongue darting across his lips uneasily. “Peter, did I do something wrong? I’m sorry if I did...”

“No, no you’ve done everything right, and that’s the problem,” Peter murmured, wrapping his arms around himself. “This was perfect. The perfect night, the perfect location, the perfect conversation, the perfect person. This was everything I’d ever wanted, don’t you see? You did everything right, Tony, and I had a wonderful time, but this... this is wrong. Every single time I’ve kissed an alpha, it’s been wrong. And I kept thinking it was because I didn’t care about them, because they were just another training exercise at my school, just another practice until the right one came along. And now I have the right one, I have you, and it’s still wrong. It’s only ever been right once in my life. It was only ever right with... with Loki.”

“Peter?” Tony blinked, biting his lip. “What’re you saying?”

“Tony, you might be the best friend I’ve ever had, ever, and I never want to stop being your friend,” Peter murmured. “But I can’t do this. I’m not going to apologize, because I don’t think I should have to. I can’t kiss you, and I can’t do anything else either. It just feels wrong, just like it has every other time. I thought it was a coincidence, but now I know it’s a pattern. You know as I kid I used to tell my aunt I thought omegas were pretty, and she thought maybe I’d be an alpha. But I wasn’t. And so I thought maybe as a kid I was just confused. I don’t think I was, Tony. I’ve spent so many years truly being confused, but now I’m not anymore. I’m not confused anymore.”

Peter let out a breath when he was suddenly pulled into a hug, and though for a moment he was tense, he realized within seconds this was given to him as a friend, and he quickly relaxed into it.

“Peter,” Tony murmured, biting his lips together for a long moment. It seemed to take him several seconds to gather himself to speak, but when he did his voice was genuine. “I’m so proud of you. I never want you to feel confused again. And I’m so sorry if I did anything to... I only wish I’d known earlier.”

“Me too,” Peter whispered, pressing his eyes shut. “Me too.”

“Hey,” Tony smiled, sitting back and handing Peter a napkin to dab at the tears. “You want dessert or you want to go? I wouldn’t want to call off this friends night out early just because of a misunderstanding.”

“I think dessert sounds lovely,” Peter smiled, a moist chuckle escaping his lips. Tony nodded, flashing a confident grin and calling the waiter over. Once again, he allowed Peter to order. When the omega was distracted, Tony swallowed hard and gazed down at the diamond sitting on the ring of gold which was clutched in his right hand. Tony bit the inside of his lip hard enough that he began to bleed, and he lapped at the wound, allowing the sting to wash over him. It helped him push any and all other thoughts as he let the ring topple from between his fingers to land silently in the plush carpet below the table.

It could all be different

In this life

Change your future in an instant

Just to feel alive

The streets down below glistened as the rain tumbled down, and when he closed his eyes he could hear the sounds of hooves trotting through puddles. It was peaceful, calming, grounding, and he could almost forget the collar locked around his neck and the satin ribbon securing his wrists at the small of his back.

“It is a shame, you know?” The Grandmaster’s voice was soft, his hand threading through Loki’s hair incredibly gently. “Stark had something near perfection just within his grasp, and he let it, uh, slip away. Of course, why settle for near perfect when you can have 24 karrot gold, you know? I saw them tonight, at a little place down on 24th. Étienne’s, have you heard of it? A lovely place for romance. They’re a beautiful couple, you know? And the omega... He is a sight for sore eyes... But don’t worry, I’m not jealous. Not much.”

Loki swallowed when Gast pressed a kiss into his hair, his hand settling just below the collar.

“But you don’t have to worry about them anymore,” he resumed in stroking Loki’s hair. “I’m going to take good care of you, and keep you so happy.”

The Grandmaster leaned closer, tucking a curl behind Loki’s left ear and pressing his lips to the shell. The kiss was gentle, tender, and warm.

“I’m not like Stark, my darling,” the Grandmaster murmured, his voice a gentle brush of warm air. “Loki, I love you.”

And just like that, Gast’s teeth pressed against Loki’s bonding gland, and the omega went lax in his arms.

What, well, what can I do?

I hate this city, but I stay 'cause of you

Why, well, why can't I change?

I wanna move on, but I'm just too afraid

Just too afraid, just too afraid

Just too afraid, that's why I stay

Just too afraid, just too afraid

Just too afraid, that's why I stay

Chapter End Notes

Poor Loki :(Poor everyone, actually. Don't give up hope, I've written ahead and you can't despair for our poor lovers. Tony, Peter, and Loki might still have a future, you'll have to keep reading and see... anyway, Loki is in a bad place, send him some love ☹️ Hope you enjoyed this chapter and as always I look forward to hearing from you all

Life is Strange

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

I know so many boys and girls

People all across the world

We walk and talk and think alike

We all cry the same tears at night

Ever since my dreams have changed

I'm crashing down like a paper plane

Nothing ever stays the same

But, all I know is life is strange

The rain could hardly put a damper on Peter's spirits as he and Tony rode home in the automobile. Peter's heart and chest ached with the knowledge he'd lost Loki, but his heart soared with the realization he'd had that night. Tony's encouragement had only further made Peter smile, and when they got home, he and Tony collapsed in the sitting room, smiling warmly at one another.

"I never thought an alpha and an omega could be friends like us," Peter chuckled, reclining back in his chair. "Did you?"

"Oh sure, but it's not common I don't think," Tony replied. "Loki and I were, in the past... anyway, will you tell the others?"

"I'll tell the world," Peter murmured, his eyes shining.

"Peter," Tony murmured, biting his lip. "I mean I'm bold and wild but that's... that's dangerous territory, kid."

"I don't care," Peter crossed his arms. "People need to know, they need to understand that people like me exist. And I'll help your cause however I can. I'll help make omegas free. I want to talk with T'Challa, though. I believe he can help a lot. If only we could all make peace..."

"Unlikely he'll ever make peace with Bucky, but I think he might speak with you," Tony nodded. "Peter? You're spectacular. Have I said that before?"

"Not using that word," Peter chuckled. "Thanks."

"Hey, you know I reached out to Thor this afternoon. He said we're not invited to Frigga's funeral. I've been friends with the Odin family since... since I was born. It's odd. Seems like Thor can't even talk to me now," Tony crossed his arms.

"We'll see," Peter murmured. "Anyway, we have big news for the house tomorrow, and then for the world."

"Big news indeed," Tony beamed. "The world will be rocked, and it's about time."

Two Years Later

“Come on, hurry, chop chop, we’re looking at 15 minutes people! You’re ready Nat? Great! Looking good, Clint. Yeah, got a question?”

“No, just a tip. You might want to relax before Peter sees you. You know how he feels. Believe me, before Natasha left to tour America I used to get wound up and I quickly learned it was stupid thing to do,” Clint stated. “She’s been gone coming on two years now but that doesn’t mean I remember her words any less.

“Look, he’s been planning this event for months and I want it to be perfect,” Tony insisted. “Anyway, Natasha isn’t back and she won’t be back for a few more months!”

“Tony, it will be, just relax,” Steve placed a calming hand on Tony’s shoulder and squeezing it gently. “Now come on. T’Challa just arrived and I thought we could get him a good seat and talk?”

“He really came?” Tony’s jaw dropped. “You have no idea how happy Peter will be about that.”

“Peter’s been doing a lot recently. Despite everything Bucky is known for, you and Peter have made a good name for yourselves that outshines Bucky’s actions. T’Challa knows Peter has potential, and if he didn’t then I’m sure Shuri would’ve told him,” Steve chuckled.

“And Thor? Have you seen him?” Tony asked hopefully. “Shuri said she’d tell him...”

“Tony...”

“What? He can’t stay hidden forever! He and I used to spend nearly every other weekend together and in the past two years I’ve seen him what... twice? Three times? I know Odin is sick but Thor is almost as pale as Loki used to be. I mean he never goes outside, just sits there with his dad and feels sorry for himself,” Tony huffed.

“You know that’s not true,” Steve murmured, leading Tony along. “He’s been doing work behind the scenes, and it’s not as if he never sees his friends. He just... can’t hold the same sort of social standing with his father so sick. He has a title to uphold, Tony. You should understand that.”

“Oh I do,” Tony snapped. “That’s why I’m here... T’Challa! Good to see you!”

“Hello Tony,” T’Challa smiled, standing and reaching out to shake Tony’s hand. “Captain.”

“My Lord,” Steve bowed his head respectfully. “We’re pleased to see you here.”

“I’m pleased to be here,” T’Challa chuckled softly. “The work you and Peter have been doing is revolutionary, Tony. And this place? It’s amazing. I was watching the flying demonstration earlier? Spectacular! Truly, I never thought I’d see my little sister riding around in a flying machine. It is incredible. People truly loved both that, and the rides in your new automobile. Stark Industries appears to have a bright future ahead of it. This is, of course, what I’m most interested in. Will, uh, Omega Barnes be speaking today?”

“It’s just Peter,” Tony smiled, moving the conversation along quickly. “His speech is very inspiring.”

“It must be, you have security at every door,” T’Challa raised his eyebrows, and Steve flushed slightly.

“You know Pepper, she is never under-cautious,” Tony joked. “Anyway, I think we’d best all take

our seats.”

Indeed, the lights were dimming and the three alphas quickly sat in the front row as a spotlight appeared on the front stage, shining on an omega woman with a large blonde bun attached securely at the back of her neck.

“Hello everyone!” She spoke, smiling kindly out at the crowd. “As CEO of Stark Industries I welcome you to the Stark Expo, where the dreams of tomorrow become the realities of today. I’m joined today by Lord Stark who will have a few words with you before we begin our talk...”

Tony raised his hands to the applause, hopping easily on stage and grinning sharply.

“Thank you, Pepper,” he declared. “Is everyone having a good time?”

He grinned again when another cheer went up, before he finally lowered his hands.

“That’s what I like to hear,” Tony beamed, ignoring the roll of Steve’s eyes. “Now I’m sure you’ve already seen the flying machine, the horseless automobile, the communication devices that allow you to talk to family across the country and one day the world! But now, I am so proud to announce that tonight’s talk is not about something I invented, but about someone who invented themselves! But you don’t want to hear me go on about it. No, I now welcome my very good friend and life companion, Omega Peter Parker!”

Another cheer went up around the auditorium, though the cheer died down slightly when Peter simply slipped from between the curtains, smiling warmly and looking altogether rather small on the very large stage.

“Thank you,” Peter murmured softly, chuckling. “I know maybe you want a big grand speech tonight, maybe you were expecting sets and lights like Lord Stark usually puts on, but I’m here just here to talk and tell you some facts that aren’t about science tonight. For the past two years I’ve been working with Lord Stark and Doctor Banner on both engineering projects and formulas.

“There are a lot of rumors about me, and a lot of questions. I’ve had the opportunity to travel, to meet other inventors from amazing places such as Beijing, Delhi, Rome, Paris, even across the sea in New York, yet I realize I haven’t truly appeared publicly before. That’s because I don’t crave any recognition for what I’ve done. I don’t mind working in the background. Science, engineering, that’s what I love. But there’s also something else I love; people, and that’s why I’m here tonight. I came to realize that I can invent amazing things to make our future easier, but those objects aren’t going to make the future better. And so I stand before you now to talk about how an omega managed to become a scientist, an engineer, and why I shouldn’t be special.

“It shouldn’t be amazing that I’m an omega scientist or inventor. I should be one of hundreds, because any omega should be able to be where I am now. I only got here because of luck, but the next person? I want them to be here because they earned it, and I want to make sure it’s possible for many omegas to be able to earn it,” Peter swallowed hard and took a deep breath, shutting his eyes tightly for only a moment before continuing.

“I didn’t have an interesting upbringing. I was an orphan from the East End who worked in a factory until I presented as an omega and was sent to Oxford’s School. As many people know, Oxford’s School is famous for taking in poor omegas and helping them turn into ladies and gentlemen. Some people have criticized them for either being too strict in their policies and treating omegas badly, or for taking in charity cases and trying to make high society of them at all. I don’t feel that I can fully criticize the school because I would not be here today if not for my school. However, I do believe that the fact we need such training schools for omegas at all speaks for

itself. I would not be here if I had not been bought from that school. However, perhaps I would be here if I'd been given a chance at an alpha level education.

"You see I was trained first in the ways to be gentile. I was taught how to set a table, how to hold a teacup, how to bake cookies, how to dance in a ballroom, how to dress, how to flutter my eyelashes and giggle, how to help an alpha get ready in the morning, and how to relax them when they return from hunting or riding or work or whatever they might do while you're left to cook to sew or knit baby things for the child you'll of course be giving that alpha. My school did a good job, and I was convinced fully of the life I wanted. And so, when I was purchased by another omega, my life fell apart," Peter cleared his throat slightly and quickly blinked back any emotion.

"As it would turn out," he went on. "That was the beginning of my real life. Everything up to that moment had been a lie. I will not speak about that chapter in my life. It is private for the ears of only my friends. Suffice to say I ended up falling in love with someone, and then my life fell apart again. Many of you have speculated that I am Tony's omega. I've heard the rumors, and I suppose they are not unfounded, but he was not the person I was in love with. I was in love with another omega."

Gasps went up around the room, and Peter took a deep, calming breath before he continued.

"I was unable to remain with that omega, so I now have no partner. Tony, I suppose, you could call my life companion, but not my partner. My close friends have asked me if I would ever be interested in seeing another omega again, but the only thing I shall say to you on that subject is this: I only ever loved one omega, and the dozens of rumors that an omega like me will inherently begin... bonding with any omega nearby the moment they go into heat is just as much nonsense as to say that a bonded omega will mate with any alpha willingly instead of their own.

"Anyway," Peter went on. "I am here to tell you more about how I began my research, and how another omega might be able to take a similar path. It starts small, as any idea does, but I hope one day it will be big, especially since I am proud to announce that Tony and I are beginning plans to open a school of science and engineering available to omegas as well as alphas or betas. The plan is still in the works, but I can guarantee you that all would be welcome, and Tony wants me to add that we will take donations for the project, if anyone is interested..."

Peter's speech went on long over an hour, but everyone seemed interested, even if some seemed to like the ideas far more than others. When the talk finally concluded, Peter declared he could take a few questions. They started out rather innocent as people asked about his inventions or how he hoped to run his school. He smiled when he chose an alpha near the front, and he smiled brightly when he spoke.

"Are you truly no longer with the other omega?" He asked. "And if not, what happened? Do you think it is inevitable that such a relationship would fall apart? If you do not think so, why?"

The man's tone was kind and the question wasn't truly malicious, yet ice turned in Peter's gut and he swallowed hard.

"I..." Peter hesitated, shifting before he sighed and took a step back. "I'm sorry, there will be no further questions. I hope you all enjoy yourselves at the Stark Expo."

Peter turned and hurried from the stage, collapsing against the wall the moment he was out of view, though he quickly straightened when he spotted T'Challa.

"Your talk was most inspiring," T'Challa smiled, nodding at Peter. "But I wanted to ensure that you are alright?"

"I'm fine, yes," Peter nodded quickly. "I apologize, I know I left the stage rather fast... Uh, thank you for attending though!"

"Of course, I enjoyed myself," T'Challa smiled. "I will contribute money to your school. I appreciate the way you approach your ideas with kindness and understanding. I still do not understand why you work alongside Omega Barnes."

"He didn't kill your father," Peter murmured. "I'm certain of it."

"And that is why he is under investigation again? Peter, his radical ideas could get you in real trouble. You are brilliant and will give so much to the world. Do not let Barnes ruin this for you, I implore you," T'Challa murmured, voice soft. "I cannot forgive him for what he did. My father was also helping omegas, and Barnes shot him in cold blood."

"He didn't, My Lord, really," Peter murmured. "Though I do understand your pain. I miss my parents and uncle too. I'll be careful, I promise. This current investigation will blow over. I was with him the night of the shooting, his story is true. I don't know who shot Alpha Sitwell and kidnapped his omega but I hope they're found."

"Sitwell was found to be against omega rights," T'Challa murmured.

"I don't condone any murder, My Lord," Peter replied. "And neither does Bucky. I promise you, one day they will find out who murdered your father and it won't be Bucky. I'm so sorry for your loss, though. Let me know if you need anything yes?"

"Yes, thank you Peter. I am going to see my sister. Also, I was just visiting with Alpha Odinson yesterday. He apologized that he could not be here tonight, his father forbade it," T'Challa sighed.

"I know," Peter murmured. "It's alright. If you see him again please tell him I wish him well. I know he has to keep the family business operating and keep his father's lands in good order, but he should do something for himself now and then or he will fall apart. Thank him for his help, though. I appreciated the bit of information he sent me about the history of omegas in Northern Europe. I hope to see you again, My Lord."

"And I you," T'Challa smiled.

"Peter, that was an amazing talk but that last question was out of line. I can't believe people," another voice spoke up loudly behind Peter.

"It's fine, Tony," Peter sighed, turning and smiling weakly at the alpha. "He didn't mean anything by it, I could tell. You truly think it went well? I thought so too... I'm happy to have done it, but I do hope it doesn't ruin things. I just wish... Oh Tony, why did it fall apart? I wrote Loki again and he still hardly ever writes back and he certainly refuses to see me, even now. He says it doesn't matter that we aren't together, he's convinced I'm prospering."

"You are," Tony pointed out.

"But it's not because he's not here!" Peter cried weakly. "I just want to see him again. Tony, I miss him so much..."

"I know, kid," Tony sighed, allowing Peter to hug him. "I miss him too. But we can't let that stop us from doing what we're doing. God, I'd do anything to see him again, to tell him..."

"Tell him what, Tony?"

“I don’t know, tell him everything,” Tony sighed, letting Peter go and flopping into a chair by the wall. “Just talk to him and know he’s safe and... and know he’s happy, for once. God, I hope he’s happy. I just hope that, at least. I hope... I just hope...”

“Tony,” Peter murmured, moving to sit beside him and squeeze his hand. “Breathe, remember? It’s okay. You’re okay. Come on, let’s go get some sunlight, okay? It’s awfully dark in here, yeah?”

“Yeah... yeah sunlight is good,” Tony shivered, wrapping an arm around himself. For a moment Peter remembered how small the alpha had become in the past two years since he’d stopped drinking any alcohol and practically stopped eating any food. The alpha flashed a grin a moment later, though, and allowed Peter to lead him outside. In the light he was a different man, shining and wealthy, so different than the alpha who Peter found occasionally trembling and panicked in their workshop after nightfall.

Tony hadn’t handled Loki’s disappearance well, neither of them had, but together they managed to survive and make a good life. Yes, Tony did have his episodes which Bruce had diagnosed as a strange sort of panic disorder known only to occur in soldiers home from war. Peter could hardly imagine it was due only to Loki leaving, but Tony wouldn’t tell Peter much about it. Peter had picked up that it had something to do with his father, as Tony often rambled about his father during his panics, but Peter knew better than to ask and risk triggering one.

Peter had his own struggles after Loki’s departure. Thankfully he didn’t have any problems with panic, but he did itch to hold Loki again, and any mention of his former lover made his chest ache with loneliness. Peter thought it would get better, and in a way it did, but he missed Loki no less now than he had two years ago. Besides that, guilt ate at him whenever he thought about Loki. He realized now that’d he’s ruined everything. If Peter was honest, he knew he hadn’t treated Loki well before he left. Peter had finally found a group of people he adored, and he’d so much wanted to fit in with them that he’d begun distancing himself from the omega he knew they had only disdain for. Now Peter would trade anything in the world to have Loki back, but his letters were always either returned unopened or with a short reply and a newspaper clipping of some new Stark Invention. Loki’s point was clear, but it didn’t make Peter hurt less.

“So,” Tony spoke once they were outside. “How’s Italian sound for tonight? I was thinking of some nice little place along the bay, candlelit dinner, you, me, and the new Verne novel...”

“Sounds perfect,” Peter chuckled softly. He opened his mouth to say something else, but he trailed off and frowned, pointing. “Tony, what’s that?”

“Huh? Oh... That’s Gast Theater,” Tony muttered. “En Dwi Gast’s theater? You know him. It’s part of how he makes his money.”

“No, I mean this...” Peter led Tony over to the theater and reached out to run his fingers along an odd groove in the brass lion near its ear. “This is... a lever.”

“You’re right,” Tony murmured. “Peter, sometimes I think your brain almost works better than mine. Almost. I never noticed that... see what it does!”

Peter’s fingers ran gently along it, before pulling the ear. His jaw dropped when out of the lion’s mouth dropped a wooden coin.

“What’s it say?” Peter murmured when Tony picked it up, frowning.

“See for yourself,” Tony muttered. “I don’t like this...”

Peter took the coin, finding an address on one side, and then wincing at the other side.

“Password,” Peter murmured softly. “Bubblegum... Bubblegum bitch? Tony, what is this?”

“It’s what he used to call him,” Tony murmured, his face suddenly pale and drawn. “To the other alphas at the parties. It was a whispered nickname among only a few. Back then I... Let’s just say I wasn’t particularly conservative about who ended up in my bed, yeah? So anyway I was included in their whisperings. They were disgusting, the lot of them, and they used to bet on him, used to see who Loki would take to bed before the end of the party. They called him their bubblegum bitch.”

“We have to go there,” Peter whispered. “Tony we have to.”

“He doesn’t want to be contacted,” Tony murmured. “He did want it back then, you know, and I’m not saying that ‘cause I’m a stupid alpha. He did, it was his coping mechanism. What if he wants... whatever this is. We shouldn’t ruin whatever this is for him.”

“But Tony,” Peter murmured. “What if... what if he doesn’t?”

“Bucky checked him out,” Tony replied. “You trusted him.”

“Two years ago!” Peter murmured. “And anyway it was right after that when Bucky started being... odd. I always did feel like he was hiding something, and then he started throwing himself under horses again, targeting nobles, making a ton of trips to cities, and now he’s under investigation again. I know he didn’t murder that alpha, but what if we’ve been so busy inventing that there’s something going on and we haven’t noticed?”

“If we go there,” Tony murmured. “We tell no one, not even Bucky or Steve. Not even Bruce. If Loki is happy, I’ve decided we’re not going to ruin that for him. We go disguised.”

“I’ll be your omega,” Peter murmured.

“Whoa, Peter, then you’ll just give Loki the wrong idea again,” Tony held his hands up.

“How else do I get in? You think omegas are invited to... whatever this is?”

“Probably not, but we don’t even know what this is,” Tony sighed. “Look, I’ll sniff around, see if this is a house or a club or what, and then we’ll talk, okay? Come on, we’ve been out here long enough.”

“Okay,” Peter murmured. “Tony? Thank you for looking into it.”

“Don’t thank me yet,” Tony muttered, leading Peter back inside.

“Lo-Lo, I’ve returned! And aren’t you looking delicious... Slip into some clothes, though, sweetheart, you have a visitor. Oh, uh, Lo-Lo, I do apologize...”

Loki choked, coughing as Gast pulled lazily at the knot holding him in the air, undoing it and watching as Loki crashed to the ground, his arms and legs splayed out around him. Gast used the toe of his boot to push at the ribbons wrapped around Loki’s arms and legs, and then he knelt to run his fingers over the black satin ribbon that had been digging into Loki’s throat.

“Come on, Lo-Lo,” Gast purred, brushing Loki’s hair out of his face and pressing a kiss to his neck. “Clean up, love, you look a mess. But... I rather like those underthings. Black lace looks

good on you. You can keep those on underneath. Ten minutes, top, I don't like keeping a guest waiting."

Loki coughed for another solid minute before he managed to pull himself up and get dressed, choosing a rather conservative pair of black slacks and a silky green top that almost covered his collar. He hurried into the washroom to touch up his makeup and he combed out his hair. Loki cast a quick glance towards the door, judging his timing, and then he pushed open the window. Biting his lip, he reached into the flower bed hanging from the window seal, letting his fingers brush along the tips of the flowers. He loved wisteria and so the Grandmaster had agreed to having these planted here. Loki's fingers ducked down underneath the flowering vines, but came up empty. Nodding once, Loki plucked a flower from the vine and threaded it into his hair. Closing the window, Loki applied another layer of lipstick and then hurried downstairs, breaking into a smile when he spotted her.

"Loki," Hela beamed, opening her arms for him to dash into her hug. "Oh, I've missed you while I've been away. Paris is so incredibly dull, you know that? Come, sit, how have you been?"

"I've been well, sister," he smiled, allowing her to lead him to the couch where she sat and handed him a glass of red wine. "I missed you, too. It feels like a long time since your last visit."

"And En Dwi treats you well?" She murmured, stroking back his hair.

"Of course he does," Loki smiled. "He's been a perfect... gentlemen."

"He always is, aren't you Dwi?" Hela chuckled, glancing over at Gast who was stirring something at the bar. He grinned and tossed her an olive, which she caught between her teeth before swallowing it down. She chuckled before waving her hand at him, declaring, "Leave us now!"

"But darling..."

"Now," Hela snapped, and Gast rolled his eyes before stepping out and closing the door behind himself.

"How has he truly been treating you?" Hela murmured, studying Loki with sharp eyes.

"It's been alright," Loki replied softly. "I don't mind, you know? It helps me forget. He's putting me in his show, though, the secret one, and I'm not entirely sure I like that..."

"Why?"

"Because performing for him or his friends is one thing, but in front of dozens of alphas I don't know? I know what they'll think of me, how they'll treat me. Again, not the worst thing in the world. I relish the attention, of course, I just don't know who might come in..." Loki sighed softly. "I mean it's people within Gast's circle, but he seems to have a fairly big circle."

"I can tell him no for you," Hela murmured. "You know I'd do anything for my darling little brother."

"No, no I need to do this," Loki sighed. "Grandmaster becomes tired of me doing the same thing over and over. This is new and exciting. He's very thrilled, says he's going to let them all share me when it's over, said... said I'm... I mean he says I'll enjoy it, so..."

"Loki," Hela sighed, wiping the single tear rolling down his cheek. "You know you can come home with me. I'll keep you safe, little brother..."

“Grandmaster... He keeps me safe,” Loki murmured. “And warm at night, and he tells me how much I mean to him, and... and...”

“You’re his greatest treasure, Loki, he does value you above all others,” Hela purred. “But I can’t help thinking, sometimes, that perhaps you could find what you’re looking for at my establishment as well... But if this dance is what will make him happy, then by all means, do it if you want to.”

“I do,” Loki nodded, almost licking his lips and then remembering he shouldn’t smudge his lipstick. “I do want to.”

“I know you’ll do an amazing job of it, little brother,” Hela murmured, pressing a kiss into his hair. “And the alphas will love you.”

“Yes,” Loki whispered. “I’m sure they will.”

“Have you heard from Thor?” Hela murmured, leaning back to study Loki, who shook his head.

“No,” Loki whispered. “He never replies to my letters...”

“Well keep trying and maybe one day he will,” Hela murmured. “I know father did many bad things, but he’s still our father and Thor is still our brother. They are bad alphas, cruel to cut us off so, but we won’t be like them, will we? We will keep trying to be a good family. Because that is what family does, we stay with each other.”

“I’ll tell you if I hear any news,” Loki whispered. “But Thor has never replied to me, never spoken to me in two years.”

“I won’t abandon you, little brother, not like he has,” Hela murmured. “But keep trying. You never know. I’d best go, my lover is waiting.”

“Hela?” Loki stood when she stood, catching her left arm in his hand. “You’ll visit again soon?”

“Oh, Loki, you poor dear. Yes I’ll visit soon,” Hela murmured, pulling him into a hug. “You have a good time tonight for me, hm? Gast told me the two of you are going to get creative.”

“Okay,” Loki pressed his eyes shut. “I... I love you?”

“I love you too, little brother,” Hela murmured, kissing his ear. “Now I’ve got to run. Ta-ta.”

Loki swallowed hard as he watched her leave, and when the front door closed and the Grandmaster ripped his shirt from his chest to press kisses along his neck, Loki simply tipped his head to the side, moaned softly, and let himself be pulled up towards the bedroom.

Don't know what I'm doing with my life

But maybe there's no wrong or right

'Cause everybody feels the same

And all we know is life is strange

So... yes, it's been two years. What do you think is going on with Hela? And what might Tony and Peter find at the club? Poor Loki has been with Gast for two years... I look forward to your comments :-) also I saw far from home and it's so good... Thanks to lokislonleyleady for editing this chapter :)

Bubblegum Bi*ch

Chapter Notes

WARNING: This chapter contains heavy emotional manipulation and abuse as well as physical and sexual abuse. If you don't want to read that then skip to below the *** some of abuse is a little present in the second half of the chapter but it is more implied and not written out as blatantly. If you don't want to read this chapter at all I'll put a little summary at the bottom.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Queentex, latex, I'm your wonder maid

Life gave me some lemons so I made some lemonade

Soda pop, soda pop, baby, here I come

Straight to number one

I'm Miss Sugar Pink, liquor, liquor lips

Hit me with your sweet love, steal me with a kiss

I'm Miss Sugar Pink, liquor, liquor lips

I'm gonna be your bubblegum bitch

“Oh, you do look, uh, spectacular...”

Loki swallowed as fingers traced the space between his bare shoulder blades, stroking up until he felt the Grandmaster playing with the little hairs at the nape of his neck. A shiver passed through him, but still Loki tilted his head in a slight incline, gazing up at the Grandmaster. The alpha smiled, his fingers ghosting over his bonding gland, the pulse point on the left of his neck, his sharp cheekbones, before settling on his bottom lip, his thumb rubbing in a gentle motion until Loki's perfectly applied lipstick was smeared.

The fingers of the Grandmaster's other hand tilted Loki's chin up into just the right angle. The alpha then pressed a long kiss to Loki's lips, chaste until he bit down on Loki's bottom lip almost hard enough to draw blood. Loki pushed down a soft whimper when he felt a hand in his hair, yanking it back so hard he felt he got whiplash. This time he really did whimper, and he had to push down a yelp when his chair toppled backwards. It was only the Grandmaster's hand on the back of his head that kept it from hitting the ground.

“Sir?”

Both Loki and the Grandmaster startled at the timid voice at the door, and they both looked up in surprise.

“Yes?” The Grandmaster drawled, already tired of the interaction.

“Uh, Carina is refusing to perform... She’s, uh, she says she won’t do it, she won’t get dressed or leave her room sir...”

“Then bring her here,” the Grandmaster sighed, rolling her eyes. “Really, you know how things work here.”

“Yes sir,” the omega curtsied and scurried away. Loki dusted himself off as the Grandmaster helped him stand, sighing and pressing a chaste kiss to his lips.

“Darling, work your magic, yes?” The Grandmaster murmured, stroking his hand through Loki’s hair. “You are so good with them.”

“Of course, Grandmaster,” Loki murmured. “They’re silly little things but they are easily persuaded.”

“They are, aren’t they?” The Grandmaster hummed, chuckling softly as he looked Loki up and down. “Well, I shall return in a few minutes, yes? I’m sure it won’t take long...”

“It won’t, Sir,” Loki bowed his head. When he looked up, the Grandmaster was gone and was replaced with a thin, whip of an omega with smeared mascara wearing what Loki assumed to be her underthings. Her arms were crossed over her chest and she stood shivering in the corner. When he drew nearer, she simply glared and pressed her back to the wall.

“You stay away from me,” she demanded. “I’ve heard about you. You’re his favorite little slut. I won’t listen to a thing you say. They said you’re nothing but his bitch.”

“How dare you call me that,” Loki spat, slapping her across the face and glaring when she yelped, holding a hand to her reddened cheek. Loki glared down at her before retreating to his vanity. He sighed deeply as he moved to fix his lipstick, letting her whimper softly for a few moments. Once she’d calmed down, Loki sighed deeply, stalked into the bathroom to run a cloth under the cool water, and then returned, glaring down at her.

“Come on,” Loki demanded. “Get up. You’re acting pathetic.”

“I won’t do it anymore,” Carina sniffled, curling up in a ball. “I’d rather die.”

“And you think he’d let you?” Loki grumbled. “You know what happens to omegas like you. They all wish they were dead, but they’re not. Your position here is good, don’t throw it away. All you have to do is go out there and dance for the alphas. There are worse things.”

“I don’t care.”

“You should care,” Loki sighed deeply, dropping to his knees and first drying her tears with the cool cloth before pressing it to her throbbing cheek. “Please, don’t follow the path of the others. You know his brother favors you. You’ll be safe here! But if you were with his brother... Just listen to me, alright? I know what I’m talking about. I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have hit you. Just... please, go out there and dance for them and then you can go back to your room with your friends and relax until the next time. And do not tell the Grandmaster that I have been kind to you, or we’ll both lose our heads. I know what you all think of me, I’m very aware, but I’ve secured my place with him in the only way I know how. We all have to survive, Carina. This is my way of surviving. I think you must think wisely about yours. If you continue to behave this way, he will give you to his brother, and you know what would become of you then...”

“I’ll dance tonight,” Karina ducked her head, pressing her eyes shut. “But I won’t forever. I won’t.”

“Maybe it won’t be forever,” Loki murmured. “But it is for now.”

He sighed deeply as she stood, wrapping her arms around herself and sniffing softly. Loki swallowed and nodded once, knocking on the door. He suppressed a wince when the Grandmaster stalked back into the room, grinned, and then sent her on her way with a little pat.

“Good boy,” the Grandmaster purred softly once he’d shut and locked the door behind her. “You always aim to please.”

Loki’s feet scrambled under him when he was hoisted up by his long, curly hair, and his hands instinctively shot out to catch himself when he was deposited on the bed. He had barely turned over when Gast sat atop him, pinning both of Loki’s thin wrists above his head with one of his hands.

“Grandmaster,” Loki breathed, panting lightly. “Do you think this a good time? I just finished dressing and doing my hair and my make up.”

“Darling,” the Grandmaster purred, his palm pressing to Loki’s cheek while his thumb brushed roughly over his right eye lid. “It is always a good time. Anyway, this is your reward, remember?”

The Grandmaster lifted his hand to examine the makeup now coloring it, before he smeared the makeup across Loki’s face. Loki swallowed but didn’t protest when Gast’s fingers dug into his bonding gland. He then lifted his fingers for Loki to lap at until they were moist before the fingers moved down his body until they pressed into him. Loki couldn’t help but moan softly, despite the way his cheeks flushed pink.

“You always amaze me, Lo-Lo,” the Grandmaster hummed as he prepared Loki, chuckling at the way the omega’s head tipped back and little noises fell from between his lips. “Every time I think you will cease to impress me.”

“But... But I never do, do I?” Loki managed, pressing himself to meet the Grandmaster.

“Hm, you never have, Lo-Lo. And that’s why I love you,” the Grandmaster finished settling between Loki’s legs and moments later Loki was left shuddering around him. The Grandmaster had a frown on his face, though, and he pinched Loki hard enough to bruise as he repeated, “I love you, Lo-Lo.”

“I... I love you too, darling,” Loki panted softly, chest heaving. This seemed to satisfy the Grandmaster for he went about his work, taking his time but pulling away just in time to make a mess all over Loki’s stomach. Loki was still panting when the Grandmaster tucked himself away and pressed a kiss into Loki’s hair.

“You are incredible, my darling Lo-Lo,” The Grandmaster hummed, pressing a second kiss to the shell of his ear. “I am so very lucky to have you, my beautiful little thing. But... oh dear, you do look a mess now. Clean yourself up, you filthy thing. Be ready when you’re called for your cue, yes? We have a show to put on.”

“I... I won’t disappoint you,” Loki panted softly.

“You never do, darling,” the Grandmaster kissed him once more. He wrinkled his nose at Loki once more before he turned to stalk from the room. It took Loki far longer to drag himself from the bed, and when he saw his reflection he flinched. Loki sighed deeply as he marched towards the bathroom, determined to shower before he completely redid the look.

“You don’t look like yourself...”

“That’s sort of the point... does this work?”

“Don’t ask that, you know it does,” Tony cleared his throat and looked away, making Peter laugh out loud and gently shove him before faking a kiss. Tony simply glared uncharacteristically serious.

“Hey,” Peter murmured, straightening his wig and examining his eyeliner in his handheld mirror. “Don’t worry, okay? Whatever happens tonight, I’ll be fine. I’ve accepted that this could be a very unpleasant experience, but I don’t care. I’m playing a part, just like Clint or Natasha, and I accept all responsibility for my own safety, okay? So stop looking like you’re going to punch the first alpha who so much as glances at me.”

“Look, Peter, this place is a lion’s den. I’ve never been here but when I was younger I went to similar places. You don’t understand. This is dangerous,” Tony sighed, glancing across the street at the hidden stairwell descending down below a commercial building. It was unassuming on the outside but Tony could guess what lay within.

“I’ll be okay,” Peter promised. “Let them touch me, I don’t care. That isn’t the issue here. We are here to see how Loki is doing, and I’ll go through anything to make sure he’s okay. Yeah? Come on, you ready?”

“Yes,” Tony sighed, hopping out of the automobile and then wrapping a secure arm around Peter’s thin, corseted waist. “Alright, let’s do this... And Peter, did I already mention tonight that I kind of wish you were interested in alphas?”

“Several times,” Peter chuckled, pressing a kiss to Tony’s cheek and leaving an obnoxious lipstick stain before pulling him towards the hidden club. Peter pushes down his nerves as they approached the old, metal door and Tony knocked twice. A slat in the upper part of the door slid open, revealing a pair of dark eyes. Tony murmured the password, and after almost no hesitation the door was pulled open and a short, muscular beta pulled the door open, eyeing Peter curiously. He didn’t say anything though, just pointed towards a second door from which music was pouring. Tony’s arm around Peter’s waist tightened, and then he swept Peter through the door, and the omega’s jaw dropped.

The club was honestly beautiful, with soft purple lighting over red velvet chairs and love seats with a dark and shining bar on the other side of the room where a tough looking alpha was serving drinks to other, much more polished, alphas in fine, imported suits. There was an open dance floor where a few couples were dancing, and up front sat a stage where three pretty omega girls were dancing so provocatively that Peter’s stomach rolled.

“Other than what’s happening on stage, it’s actually... nice,” Peter whispered. “Somehow I thought it would be more... frightening.”

“You think that now,” Tony murmured. “It’s all a facade. This place is no different than what you probably had in mind, it just looks pretty. Come on, let’s find a table...”

“Tony! Is that you? Friend, it’s been so long!”

Tony literally cringed, the expression on his face making Peter want to burst out in a laugh which he quickly swallowed when Tony shook his head sharply. Sighing, Tony turned and accepted a handshake from a bespectacled alpha in a pressed grey suit and a pink silk scarf who was grinning from ear to ear.

“Yes, hello, good to see you too, now if you don’t mind, we’re busy,” Tony drawled before beginning to turn and lead Peter away but the other alpha caught his arm and this time pulled him in for a hug so there was no possible way for him to escape.

“Tony!” The other alpha beamed. “It’s been a long time! What brings you back into this scene? And with such a cutie!”

Peter jumped when the alpha finally let Tony go only to reach over and squeeze Peter’s cheek hard enough to leave a bruise.

“Uh, I have my reasons, mostly a good drink so if you wouldn’t mind my omega and I are going to head over to the bar, thanks,” Tony made to stand up, glaring when the other alpha didn’t let go of his arm. Clearing his throat, Tony added, “I’m also here on the down low so if you wouldn’t mind shutting up that’d be great. Unlike some people, I don’t need to announce my presence everywhere I go. Isn’t that right, darling? But really I want to spend this night with this cutie, hm Pauli?”

Peter leaned over to kiss Tony again when he mentioned Peter’s designated nickname for the night and he quietly whispered, “Who’s this guy?”

Tony laughed as if Peter had said something hilarious and he leaned back to whisper, “Justin Hammer, failed inventor, used to attend the same functions as me.”

Peter nodded and he giggled stupidly, fluttering his eyelashes as Tony leaned away.

“Hope you two aren’t talking about me,” Hammer chuckled nervously, raising his glass to his lips and glancing back and forth between them.

“Course we are!” Peter giggled. “Cause I wanted to tell Mr Stark how pretty you are! I like your tie, looks like something I could wear!”

“Yeah?” Hammer grinned, beginning to reach over to Peter again. This time the omega was ready, though, and he snapped at Justin’s fingers, catching them in his mouth and sinking his teeth in hard. He grinned when the alpha let out a loud swear and Peter finally let him go.

“Oh yes, watch out, he bites,” Tony chuckled, coughing a laugh into his napkin as Peter giggled stupidly again and tucked under Tony’s arm.

“I’m bleeding!” Hammer cried, staring down at his fingers in horror.

“Whoopsies!” Peter giggled. Tony chuckled and ruffled his hair, letting out a sigh of relief when Hammer dashed off for the bathroom.

“That was disgusting,” Peter coughed softly, accepting a shot glass from Tony who’d snatched it from a server walking by. “You seriously used to go around with that guy?”

“No, he just attended the same functions as me. We used to try to invent the same things, his always failed, and we used to try to date the same omegas,” Tony shrugged.

“Hopefully they chose you,” Peter coughed, trying to get the taste out of his mouth.

“Most assuredly they did,” Tony grinned. He opened his mouth to say something else, but the lights went out in the club just before a spotlight shone onto the stage and the band’s music became that of the beginning of a show. A platform rose in the middle of the stage revealing En Dwi Gast who was grinning feral, his arms wrapping around the shoulders of two of the omegas in stage while the third sat at his feet.

“Welcome, my friends!” He beamed, bowing twice. “Everyone having a good time? Wonderful, wonderful. I hope you enjoyed Mina Nina, and Carina, yes? These girls are so lovely... But now, we have our special guest! Some of you know him, all of you will love him, he is absolutely gorgeous but you don’t need to hear it from me to believe it... here he is, the Bubblegum Bitch!”

Peter really did feel like throwing up this time as the lights went pink and then some curtains at the back of the stage fell open revealing a pole upon which an omega was twisted seductively. Peter would never have recognized him from the makeup, or the bright pink, skin tight, latex suit yet Peter looked into those green eyes that fluttered open from under mountains of pink eyeshadow and long, long eyelashes, and Peter knew that he was looking at Loki. When the band began to play music like Peter had never heard before, and the omega began to tuck his legs up the pole, climbing it, pressing close, and then quite amazingly letting go with his arms to simply hang there with only his legs tucked tightly around it, Peter had to look away, pressing his eyes shut.

“Dear Lord...” Tony’s voice was a harsh choke, bringing Peter back to the reality of what was stretched out in front of him. “What has Gast done to him?”

“Tony,” Peter whispered, feeling very sick. “What do we do? There’s no way... no way he wants this. We both know Loki. What do we do? Tony, we have to do something! We can’t now, but... Somehow, we have to contact him. Now we know, we can’t let this continue. That... that dick.”

Peter cringed as Loki finally left the pole to begin dancing on Gast’s lap, the alpha now seated in something that looked like a throne at the edge of the stage, the other three omegas draped around him. The whole thing turned his stomach, but when the music hit a high point and Gast suddenly grabbed Loki, Peter watched in horror as the suit tore in half (evidently on purpose) leaving only a black and pink corset. Peter could so easily see the flush on Loki’s face as cat calls rang through the club and Tony gripped his glass so hard it shattered.

Peter suppressed a soft cry and he grabbed out a handkerchief which he pressed to the wounds. He was thankful that no glass had embedded itself in Tony’s palm, but the alpha seemed hardly to notice. Instead, he was looking around the club like he was going to strangle someone.

“What the hell?” Tony suddenly spat. “What the hell...”

“What?” Peter gasped, looking up quickly.

“I’m going to kill him,” Tony nearly stood, and he would have if Peter hadn’t pulled him back down.

“Who? Gast? Stop it Tony, think! Who are you talking about?” Peter hissed.

“Look,” Tony spat. “Look at him! I’m going to kill him! I thought he was on our side! Has he been lying this whole time?”

Peter followed the finger Tony was using to point, and then indeed Peter’s jaw hit the floor. Tony wasn’t pointing to Gast. Instead, he was pointing to an alpha across the room and Peter’s jaw dropped when he recognized him. It was Captain Rogers. He wasn’t alone. Instead he was laughing with another group of alphas who had omegas sitting on their laps. No wait... They weren’t sitting... Peter suddenly did throw up a bit in Tony’s glass, and the alpha rubbed his back, his face beet red.

“I’ll kill him,” Tony spat. “That liar!”

“Shut up,” Peter hacked softly, digging his nails lightly into Tony’s arm. “Shut up right now and

think. This isn't the time or place for anger. We have a job right now and we can't blow our covers at the moment. We stay over here and see what happens. We deal with Steve later. Got it? Now shut up and pretend you don't hate this... Also don't drink from that glass."

"Thanks for the advice," Tony's lip curled as he set the glass at Hammer's abandoned spot.

Eventually, the spectacle ended with Loki stretched out on the stage, panting. The clapping was thunderous, and Gast beamed, standing up and helping Loki to his feet. He pressed a kiss to Loki's hair, blindfolded him, and then shoved him to his knees.

"Lovely, lovely, isn't he?" Gast grinned, stroking his hair. "You'll all be so happy to hear that he is available for the rest of the evening! Don't worry, he doesn't cost much! We even have a private room in the back..."

A cheer went up around the room, but Peter caught Tony's arm and he whispered, "You've got to do that. That's how you get in to talk to him. Get him in the private room, talk to him, find out how to get him out of this."

"And you? You shouldn't be here alone," Tony hissed.

"I'll be fine. We're here for him, you have to go through with this," Peter hissed. "I'll be observing Steve."

"Don't trust him," Tony hissed. "That traitor! That lying son of a--"

"Hush, go on! They're taking bids or something, I don't know. Go!" Peter gently pushed Tony, watching as he uneasily stalked forward to watch the proceedings. Steve stayed out of it, hanging around near the bar and sipping a dark colored drink. He was alone now, all of his buddies and their omegas having moved off to be a part of the bidding. Peter took a deep breath before he slinked up to the blonde and purred, "Hey there, all alone?"

Steve turned, raised his eyebrows skeptically, and then his face paled three shades.

"What are you doing here?" He hissed. "You have to leave!"

"I could ask you the same question," Peter murmured. "Where's Bucky? Backstage? Or maybe at home thinking you're at an omega-right's rally?"

"That's what they think," Steve whispered. "They think I'm a fake, and it needs to stay that way. Please, you have to get out of here."

"Are you not a fake?" Peter replied, crossing his arms and leaning a little closer.

Steve cast a nervous glance over at the other alphas before whispering, "If you must know, no I'm not. But you're going to blow my cover so get out of here. I don't know what you're doing here but you need to leave. It isn't safe."

"Cover?" Peter whispered, refusing to budge.

"We'll talk about this later... is that Tony? Wait, was he here with you?" Steve starred as Tony stepped on stage to take Loki's arm, evidently the winner of the bid. He was taking Loki's arm and beginning to lead him towards the back, leaving Steve to stare in shock.

"Yes, I'm here with him," Peter whispered. "And here my name is Pauli. We're trying to figure out what's going on with Loki. Did you know he'd be here?"

“I...” Steve hesitated, glancing towards the other alphas. “It’s complicated. Essentially, yes. Look, we need to talk later, okay? You never should have come here. Tony never should have come here. Loki... Loki needed to do this.”

“What? He needed to do this? Are you crazy?” Peter hissed. “You’re just like all the others, claiming he deserves this... I can’t believe you.”

“No, you don’t understand,” Steve’s hands balled into fists and he looked around again carefully. Sighing, Steve leaned in close to whisper, “He was here because he wanted to be. He’s been feeding us secrets for two years now. There’s a huge smuggling operation happening all around Europe that the police refuse to investigate, so we’ve taken it into our own hands. Bucky thinks it’s Hydra, he thinks they’re all over Europe now. Thing is, Loki can only tell that Gast is only working out of England. He can’t figure out who’s pulling the strings.”

“You mean Loki is... a spy?” Peter’s jaw dropped.

“Hush!” Steve hissed, looking around. “Yes! But do speak softly please? After tonight... I can’t believe Gast put him through this. It’s disgusting. But that doesn’t mean he’ll want to leave either. Like I said, he’s been feeding us information about the smuggling operation, and yet... He seems to... Bucky has talked to him about it, several times, and Loki refuses to leave. He says he has made a decision to help Bucky’s cause, says this is what he wants. Bucky’s talked to him Peter, I swear, but it’s all so delicate. I don’t blame him if he leaves now, but if he does I don’t know how we’ll find out the mastermind. But also... I think Loki’s is addicted to Gast. I don’t know that he’ll want to leave. Bucky has asked more than once if Loki wants to get out because I’ve integrated myself and I can keep trying to pry. Loki says no, every time. One of these days maybe he will want to get out and then it’ll be up to me, but not if you blow my cover. Please Peter, get out of here. I’ll tell Tony where you went. Where are you going?”

“Back to the hotel beside the convention center,” Peter murmured. “Bruce thinks Tony and I are out at dinner. I’ll go back to him.”

“Stay safe,” Steve murmured. “I could escort you...”

“I’ll be fine,” Peter promised. “You stay safe too, alright?”

“I will be,” Steve promised. “Now go on, before someone notices you. Right now they’re still all distracted.”

“Oh no...” Peter bit his lip, looking up and spotting Hammer looking around the place. Steve squeezed Peter’s shoulder and gently pushed him towards the door.

“I’ll handle him,” Steve promised. “You go on. Stay safe.”

“I will, thank you,” Peter murmured. He ducked behind a column as Hammer strolled by, and then he dashed out of the club and back towards their hotel room, worry for Loki bubbling all through his chest.

Chapter End Notes

Loki convinces one of the dancers (Carina) that she should continue performing for the Grandmaster when she refuses to do so anymore. After this, the Grandmaster has

sex with Loki and tries to enforce the idea that Loki loves him. Loki then goes to dance for the alphas in the Grandmaster's secret club where Peter and Tony are in the crowd in disguise. While at the club, Tony runs into an old business associate (Justin Hammer). After Loki's performance, he is blindfolded and put up for bid for the night and Tony 'purchases' him. Meanwhile, Peter and Tony spot Steve at the club so Peter goes to confront him and figure out why he's there. Steve admits that Loki is a spy for him and Bucky and that Loki has been feeding them secrets about the Grandmaster (who Bucky thinks is involved with Hydra) for two years. Steve states that Bucky has talked to Loki about leaving the Grandmaster, but Loki refuses to do so. Steve, Loki, and Bucky have been trying to determine who is running Hydra because they don't think it's the Grandmaster, but they haven't been able to figure out who the mastermind is.

Anyway next chapter will be a little lighter probably. I hope you enjoyed and I look forward to your comments! 😊

Weeds

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

*I miss all of my exes
They're the only ones that know me
And God knows that sex is
A way to feel a bit, a little bit less lonely
Yeah, I tried to keep it covered up
Yeah, I thought I cut him at the root
But now I think my time is up, 'Cause he keeps growing back like weeds
Baby, just open your eyes to see, h e's growing from inside me
And I just don't know what I can do, I thought I cut him at the root*

Although the loud music of the band still filled the main room of the club, a blanket of silence was cast over the back room when the door glided shut. Tony hadn't said a word since he'd shelled out the money for Loki. He was fairly certain Loki didn't know who'd 'purchased' him, especially when Tony finished locking the door and the omega leaned up against him, blindfold still tight.

"So," Loki's voice was a sultry purr. "You going to let me see you, love?"

Anyone else would never have detected the slight tremor in Loki's voice, but Tony remembered when Loki had been a child and had spoken in that same voice after Thor's friends treated him badly. The voice sounded brave, confident, yet Tony knew that if Loki didn't have so much control, his lower lip would be trembling.

"Loki," Tony murmured. "Take it off, please. It's me."

The moment Tony spoke, Loki froze, and moments later he ripped the blindfold from his head, tossing it aside like it was a poisonous snake.

"Tony?" Loki murmured, his jaw dropping in horror. "What are you doing here? How... how long have you been here?"

"Long enough," Tony replied, swallowing but holding eye contact. "Loki... I'm so sorry."

"You're sorry?" Loki spat, his horror melting into anger. "You're sorry? For what, exactly? I know you have a lot of regrets, Tony, but I didn't think I was one of them. You made my place perfectly clear. Oh, you sent your regards through letters and the like, but I've always been praised for my cleverness. You said I could return, but to what? More of the same? You running around with other omegas, ignoring me, allowing your friends to mock me while you tell the world I am to be your bride? No, I want nothing to do with it. Did you have a purpose here, or did you want to ask me to return again so you could ease your conscious that at least you *tried* to save the *poor, destitute omega* who you as good as drove out of your home? How did you end up here, anyway?"

"I... by accident. There was a lion statue across from the Stark Expo that had a strange groove. When I pulled the ear a disk came out with this location and... and a name you used to be called. I wanted to investigate. Loki," Tony murmured, swallowing and shifting his weight. "I didn't know he was treating you so badly or I would've come to his manor a long time ago."

"To what? To *save* me?" Loki interrupted, his eyes flashing. "Did it ever occur to you that maybe I don't need saving?"

"But the way he was treating you out there? Making you do that show?"

"I agreed to do the show of my own free will," Loki spat. "Oh Tony, you always did get off on being a hero, saving the poor omega in distress, but like I said, I can take care of myself. I don't need you. So I repeat, what are you doing here? Make your point and then get lost, I have other customers waiting."

"But surely you don't want this?" Tony murmured, waving his hand vaguely towards the door. "You've always been so proud..."

"Oh, grow up Tony," Loki glared, moving to the side table, grabbing a glass of water, and offering it to Tony who sipped at it hesitantly. Loki then went to sit on the bed and crossing his arms. "You think we can all wave a magic wand and then get by like you? This isn't a nightmare, this is reality. I know you and your rich, alpha buddies like to pretend that everything is wonderful and that omegas will stand up and rule the world just because they feel like it and everyone has the power and the option to simply get emancipated as a choice because they want to, but that is a fantasy that only rich alphas like you can live in. This, Tony? This is how omegas like me survive. This is how we put food on the table when there isn't an alpha to do it for us. Oh, and what's that? We can get jobs and work? This is our work, this is my work, and you are keeping me from getting paid."

"Loki..."

"I told you to get out of here!" Loki suddenly stood and shoved Tony hard enough for him to stumble lightly. "Unless you want something from me. Wouldn't surprise me, I always did think you were only one step away from paying for your hookups."

"I would never, I don't believe in that--"

"Then you're simply keeping omegas from having the money to put food on the table. Bet they all wish you would pay them, it'd make it much more worth their while," Loki glared.

"Loki, what happened to you?" Tony murmured, swallowing hard. "You're not the omega we knew."

"Who's we?" Loki growled. "Who'd you come here with? Sam, Clint?"

"Peter," Tony murmured, swallowing hard. "We both missed you so, so much. He hasn't loved another since you left and... and neither have I. Loki, we miss you. We just want you to come home."

"Wait... you said Peter's here?" Loki paled three shades. "And you left him alone? He saw me? He saw this place?"

"Calm down, he's okay," Tony promised, but Loki still shot towards the door, panting softly, his eyes wild.

"I can't believe you'd be so... so irresponsible!" Loki cried, his hand hovering just above the doorknob. "Get him out of here! You should never have left him alone! What if something happens to him? You idiot! I can't believe you! You haven't changed, not since you were a child. You are still a child, creating your own paradise, your own dreamland so you can ignore the world around you! He could get hurt, taken, we don't even know what could happen to him! How dare you bring him here, Tony Stark? Can you believe I used to care for you? You're so irresponsible!"

"You... you used to care for me?" Tony blinked in confusion. "When was that?"

"Why? So you can fantasize about yet another omega you could be with? Be honest, was there ever a moment you haven't sexualized the omegas you claim to want to protect? You wouldn't understand true caring, or love, if it slapped you in the face. You leave omegas grasping at straws as you happily leave them and dance along to the next one! I thought I knew love, but I was wrong. Anyway, I don't do love. And let's be honest, neither do you. You never loved me, and I'll bet you never loved Peter. Ever since you were a child you've only ever truly loved yourself."

"Look you want me to be honest? Fine! Fine, I'll be honest!" Tony finally snapped, nearly shaking.

"Good, then be honest!" Loki spat. "Tell me how you really feel!"

"Fine, I will!" Tony shouted, his eyes flashing. "You think you're the only one who has struggled with love? You haven't the slightest idea what a struggle with love even is! I've never, ever loved myself. From the moment, the exact moment, that I discovered you were a beta I was devastated! You remember that summer! You remember what happened! I was too old for you, sure, and you were just Thor's kid brother, and yet before I left for America, before my father shipped me off like the bit of useless baggage I am, you and I made a promise. It was a promise of fools, of children, and it wasn't even a promise of words! But it felt like a promise to me. You remember it as well as I. In that moment, that second we spent beside the river with your lips to mine, tangled in each other's arms, I thought I found my future. But no. I came home and I learned I was wrong.

"The moment I came home, I knew whatever we could have had was now forever taken from us. You remember how long it took before I could face you that summer? It was not because I did not miss you. It was because I was trying to hide and deny the way my father had treated me when I came home and discovered your designation. He knew I cared for you, and suddenly I was not a true alpha in his eyes. I never had been, of course, but no son of his was going to be seen courting a beta! And so my summer was spent hiding the bruises I acquired from his drunken anger. And hiding from you, and Thor, until you were both convinced I cared not for your affections. And even when I tried, and I did try, to convince my father that you being a beta shouldn't matter, that being a beta made you no less a wonderful person and companion, I had my lessons beat into me until I couldn't stand to look at you as much as stuff my shaking hands in my pockets. And I've tried, Loki, I have and I did try, to look beyond those lessons. I still try every day, but it's hard to forget scars that are of the mind instead of the body. I still try every day to forget the way he'd lock me in our basement with only a small candle that would burn out by the end of the first day, and only enough food for the second day and enough water for the fourth day until he finally sobered up enough to retrieve me by the end of the week. I try to forget, but I can't.

"And then when I finally did learn we were wrong all along, that you were an omega, well I could have been thrilled. Except what was I to find out except that you love other omegas! And besides, what kind of person would I be to deny you that? And even if you did love alphas, it seems that I'm always reminded of my father's disdain, my father's hatred of me, and you, and the idea that I should ever be happy with you. And so I stepped back and allowed myself to try so hard to let you be yourself, to let you live your life! And I desperately hoped to find an omega, any omega, that

might hold a candle to you. And then I found Peter! But he too loves omegas, and so once again I stand back and allow him to be himself while I wait for a future that will never come to someone like me. My father was wrong for so many things, but it seems he had me pegged right when he shouted what I was down the stairs to the basement.”

“Wait, Tony, I... your father, he did that?” Loki blinked slowly. “Your father... your father abused you so badly? You... why have you never told me?”

“What would be the point?” Tony threw his arms in the air. “When you will never return my affections? Besides, then you too would have seen the weakness my father always showed me every single day. Better to fill my life with omegas who might give me the time of day. But I still want desperately to keep you safe and if you wish to live like this then that is your choice, not mine. I do not wish to take command of your life. I’ve only ever wished to allow you to be yourself, and be happy. And I’ve fought for a world where you can be free. Why do you think I work every day to give omegas more freedom? Because they deserve it! Because you deserve it. And yes, I do still struggle with the knowledge my father would beat me into submission if he knew of my actions. Every day I wake up and tell myself that his thoughts don’t matter, that my father was wrong. And every day I tell myself that I should allow myself to love you, and allow you to love me, and then I remember, and then I drink until I’ve forgotten. Don’t lecture me about love, or hatred, or fathers. I realize your father was awful, and I have only empathy about that. I only wish I could escape my father’s legacy. I only wish I could banish his lessons from my heart. I only wish I could love you the way you deserve to be loved.”

Tony was trembling, and he dug his nails against his palms until the omega reached out to stop him, surprising both of them. When Tony poked at him, Loki batted his hand away, swallowing incredibly hard as he wrapped his arms around himself.

“I truly don’t care,” Tony finally murmured. “What my father would think of me. I will never be the alpha he thought Captain Rogers was. I can only be me. And if I am not enough then so be it. But that doesn’t mean I will stop working towards something better. I’ll never stop. And I’ll never stop trying for forget him.”

“Tony, you are not weak. You are the strongest alpha I have ever met. You are not weak. You are not. And Tony, I will never let anyone treat you like that again. That I will swear to you,” Loki murmured, studying the trembling alpha carefully. “I never knew any of that. I never knew your father hurt you. That summer, I thought you no longer cared for me. And from that moment on, I thought I was a burden or an omega you simply wanted to save to bolster your own confidence.”

“Loki, I have always wanted to save you, but it was because deep down I cared for you. But perhaps I was wrong all along. Like you said, perhaps I must learn that you can care for yourself,” Tony sighed, pressing his eyes shut. “I’m sorry. I’m sorry I’ve caused you so much pain over the years. I’m sorry I could not tell you the truth. Many years ago mother called me a story teller, father called me a liar, and I suppose it’s up to you to decide which of them was right. Maybe I never should have come here, but I...”

“Hell, I missed you, Loki, and I just wanted to ensure that you were alright. And if you are, fine, I’ll leave. I just... I wish it wasn’t this way. To hell with it, I have loved you Loki, for so many years. And I know it’s too late now to say so, but if I’m to never see you again then I thought you should know first. The night you left I was going to truly propose to you. I had a ring, Jarvis made a candle lit dinner, and I bought you a bouquet of your favorite flowers. But you left, and I’ve tried to accept it. Both Peter and I have. But I had to see if you were alright. I just... I just didn’t want to think you might be in the midst of being hurt as I once was. I’m sorry if I was wrong to come see you. I’d best go.”

Loki watched as Tony sighed, stuffing his hands deep in his pockets as he turned towards the door, however he hesitated before he exited and he murmured, “Steve is here, for some reason, by the way. I’m going to confront him when he comes to the manor next time. He’ll no longer be welcome. I just wanted to let you know.”

“You shouldn’t do that,” Loki murmured.

“And why’s that?”

“Because unlike you, story teller, I actually am I liar.”

Tony turned and raised an eyebrow, and he was surprised when he saw Loki smirking lightly under the soft layer of moisture in his eyes.

“Come here,” Loki murmured, patting the bed beside him. “If Steve is here then Peter will be safe, we don’t need to worry about him. I never tell secret, I don’t trust anyone, however I do trust you, for now. I have a story to tell you, only this time it’s true. I am not truly happy here, Tony. I don’t want this life, and I don’t need this life. This isn’t about money, or sex, or happiness. Actually, Tony, this is everything about emancipation. Perhaps it started out about money, or just... forgetting everything for a while, but then everything changed. Peter is the only one who cannot move on. I don’t talk about feelings, as you might recall, but I have not stopped loving him any less than the day I left. And I couldn’t stand the thought of living in a world where, at any moment, he or anyone like him might be subjected to this life. And so, I made a decision.”

“A decision?” Tony blinked, settling uneasily on the bed beside Loki.

“Indeed,” Loki nodded once. “The world isn’t safe for omegas like Peter, but I decided that for once I would do something to change that. You say you love me, Tony? I don’t know if I can believe you or not. But like you said, perhaps we’ll never see each other again, so here’s another correction to my lies. Tony, I have loved you since that summer so many years ago. I both despised you and admired you as you made your way through life, a beautiful disaster. You are so ignorant, Tony, and yet your heart has always been in the right place. And so, finally, I decided that mine would be as well. You inspired me, Tony, and what I’ve been doing has been out of love for both you and Peter. I don’t need saving, for once I’m the one doing the saving.”

“Meaning what?”

“This job? It isn’t my true goal here. For two years now I have been undercover for Bucky and Steve. Hydra, Tony, they’re in Europe, in England, and Gast is involved. I’m his favorite slut, and if anyone could find information it would be me. Already I have inadvertently taken out three top Hydra members and helped their omegas to safety. It was easy. I’ve had sex with so many that three people I happened to bed leaking information was hardly something to notice. They were three amongst dozens,” Loki shrugged lightly.

“Leaking information?”

“Truth serum is incredibly effective, and the one I used had amnesic effects so they never knew I was the one who they’d told. Bucky’s been doing a marvelous job at releasing omegas from the docks before they’re shipped overseas or distributed here. Hydra seemed to discover who leaked the location each time and so there went three of their top members by their own hand...” Loki smirked, shrugging.

“So what, you’ve been a spy this whole time?” Tony blinked, his jaw dropping in shock.

“Yes,” Loki smiled, slipping his hand into Tony’s. “But by this time tomorrow you won’t remember that.”

“Why?” Tony frowned, studying Loki in confusion, who simply smirked and shrugged.

“Well,” Loki chuckled. “Because I slipped some of the drug into your water. Don’t worry, you’ll be fine. You simply won’t remember any of this conversation which honestly is for the best. I love you, Tony, but I left for a reason. Loving you hurts so much, because I truly don’t know if I can trust that you’d love me back.”

“You poisoned me?” Tony gasped, staring at the glass in horror.

“Sweetheart, no, you just won’t remember any of this,” Loki smiled, taking the glass and setting it aside. “And I can go back to my job, you can go back to your life, and it will be for the best.”

“But Loki...” Tony swallowing, his eyes swelling with tears quite suddenly, to which Loki clucked softly.

“Hush, this is just the truth serum taking full effect,” Loki hummed, reaching to wipe at the tears. “You’re alright.”

“No! No I’m not alright!” Tony pulled awake, sniffing angrily. “I love you, Loki. I don’t want to leave you here. All of those omegas? They didn’t matter. I’ve only ever loved you, Loki, and every day I’ve been hurting without you there. I love you so much, please don’t make me leave you here! Because if you do I... I... I don’t know if I can live with myself.”

“Hush, don’t say that,” Loki sighed softly, pressing a gentle kiss to Tony’s cheek. “You’ll wake up in the morning and everything will be alright again. You won’t remember this, and you’ll be happy.”

“But I want to remember this,” Tony demanded, searching Loki’s eyes. “I want to remember you! I love you, damnit, and now you admit you loved me too but you’re making me leave you? This isn’t fair! This isn’t right!”

“Hush, you sound like a spoiled child,” Loki sighed. “You’re okay.”

“I’m not okay!” Tony gasped, shaking his head wildly. “Come back with me! Don’t make me leave you! Please, please don’t make me leave you!”

“Tony, breathe, okay? Hush, darling, just breathe with me. You’re okay, and you’ll be okay tomorrow-“

“I won’t!” Tony demanded again, wheezing out a gasping sob. “I never will be! I want to go and drink and forget but I can’t disappoint Peter because he’s the first decent omega who’s cared for me! And even if he will only ever love you, Loki, I don’t care! I won’t drink and let him down, but I want to right now because I can’t do this! You can’t make me leave you! You can’t make me lose you just like I lost her!”

“Who, Tony?” Loki murmured, stroking Tony’s hair gently. “Lost who?”

“My mother,” Tony sobbed softly, curling in a ball in Loki’s lap. “I can’t lose you like I lost my mother.”

At that, Loki froze, swallowing very hard. His hand paused in Tony’s hair, and he swallowed hard, gazing down at the alpha uneasily.

“Please, I love you Loki,” Tony sobbed softly. “Please don’t make me lose you.”

“Tony, listen to me very carefully,” Loki murmured, sighing. “You’re going to go out of there, find Steve, tell him you’re drunk and that you want to go home and he will bring you home. And if you truly love me, then... Then perhaps I... I am not unwilling to see you again. I will have to explain everything again, because you won’t remember any of this, but I... I am willing to. You will have a vague memory of your emotions tonight. Here, this paper? Put it somewhere you’ll see it in the morning. It says how you can find me, how we can meet. I... I will explain everything to you if we meet again. Now go, please, I have more work to do tonight.”

“But you’ll see me again?” Tony murmured hopefully, wiping his nose with his sleeve.

“Perhaps,” Loki sighed, running his hand through Tony’s hair. On a whim, Loki gathered his bravery and then leaned close. Tony’s eyes fluttered closed as Loki pressed a soft, tender kiss to his lips. It tasted like gin, mint, and smoke, and it left Loki’s heart hammering in his chest as they pulled away. For a long moment, they gazed at each other, as Loki memorizes each line that age had placed upon Tony’s face.

“You should go,” Loki finally murmured, his hands slipping around Tony’s waist. “And darling? I... I do love you.”

“I love you too,” Tony whispered, his face pressed in the space between Loki’s shoulder and his jaw. “But I won’t remember any of this?”

“You’ll remember the emotions,” Loki murmured. “And I hope that’s enough. Take care of yourself, alright? And if you remember, please tell Peter I love him? God, I love you both so much... Maybe I’ll see you both one day, again. Now go, please? I love you.”

They studied each other for perhaps a moment too long. For Loki, though, it was not long enough. However, when the door closed with a soft click, Loki sighed, arranged his makeup, and got ready for the next alpha.

Chapter End Notes

So... Loki and Tony are back together! Sort of.... don’t worry, they’ll be back together soon. Also, now you know what Loki has really been up to... What do you think of his double life? I look forward to hearing from you :)

Forget

Chapter Notes

Okay so this chapter does have flashbacks in case you're confused what's happening at certain bits. Thank you so much to lokislonleylelady for editing and giving me ideas for this story, you're awesome :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Ever since I can remember

Life was like a tipping scale

Like an abacus I played with

Counting every win and fail

'Cause I have lived my life in debt

I've spent my days in deep regret

Yeah, I've been living in the red

But I wanna forgive and forget

"Lo-Lo, darling, you have a guest. Oh, aren't you looking nice? I knew that would look so lovely on you!"

"Hm? Who is it?" Loki looked up from where he was stretched across the taffeta sheets on the Grandmaster's canopied bed. Loki snapped his heart shaped makeup compact closed and set it aside as he let his silk robe fall loosely down his thin shoulders. When the Grandmaster got close enough, Loki chuckled and pulled the alpha to him, pressing a kiss to his lips and murmuring, "Or is it a surprise for me?"

"Oh it's a surprise alright, baby," the Grandmaster chuckled, rubbing his nose to Loki's before bopping the tip of his pointer finger on Loki's nose. "Our dear friend Captain Rogers is coming by."

"Is he?" Loki sighed, flopping over with a great sigh.

"You don't like his visits, Lo?"

"Oh, you know him. He's the good captain until he comes here and lets out all his depravity," Loki sighed deeply. "Only reason he comes is cause he can do things with me that he could never get away with doing to his own omega."

"Oh darling, you can take it," the Grandmaster shrugged. "But this time he brought a friend!"

"A friend?" Loki blinked. "Who's that?"

"Our dear old buddy Tones or Tony, or whatever his name is! Haven't seen him around in... years,

actually. Used to be real big in the scene until he got... decent or whatever he likes to call it these days. Anyway, we'll change that, won't we Lo?" Grandmaster chuckled and pinched Loki's cheek. "Get ready, they've got two hours. Make it worth their while and I'll shower you in the best alcohol tonight. Drink it or put it on your wounds, I don't care, just enjoy the whole bottle and then you and I will have such fun, won't we baby?"

"Such fun," Loki drawled. "Now go on, darling, I have some last minute preparations. Lord Stark is a special occasion."

"Indeed," Grandmaster hummed. "I expect to hear some good things when he's done. Don't hold out yeah? I know how good you are at following orders. Nothing without their permission, clear?"

"Crystal, now I really do have to fix my lipstick. Go on, get out or I'll never be ready."

"Oh, you're ready for me any time," Grandmaster chuckled, pinching Loki and then dancing out of the room. Loki took a deep breath the moment he was gone and then scrambled to fix his hair and throw on some half decent, lovely clothes. He felt his heart hammering, but he settled his nerves with a few sips of peppermint tea and then settled in the chair near the window. He tried not to startle when he heard the door click up, and he felt his chest swell when he glanced over and spotted Tony and Steve standing in the doorway.

"Hello Captain," Loki first murmured

"Loki," the alpha nodded somberly.

"Hello, love," Loki whispered a moment later, finally turning to Tony. "You finally come to visit?"

"Loki, it's really you!" Tony murmured, swearing softly as he stepped into the room. He was frozen there next to Captain Rogers for a moment before he dashed over and Loki chuckled as he was pulled into a hug.

"Oh! This is different," Loki murmured, relaxing into the embrace.

"I'm... not certain, but it felt right," Tony murmured. "The other night I visited you and I must've been awfully drunk because I don't remember a thing. Steve said I was demanding that I had to see you again, and ever since then I've... I've missed you, more than I already did. I don't remember what happened, I just remember... Loki, did you and I..."

"No, we didn't," Loki chuckled softly. "We just talked, but it was a very passionate conversation. Come here, sit, my but you dressed like you're eighteen again!"

"Steve told me to. He said we have to pretend we've really mussed you up before we leave," Tony bit his lip, glancing over at the alpha who was now sitting, leaning against the door. "Peter told me that you a, you know, spy. Why couldn't Steve or Bucky tell me? I could've helped!"

"As I'm sure Steve already told you," Loki glanced over and shared a look with the alpha. "The fewer people who knew, the safer I would be. It was better this way. How is Peter? Is he alright? It's been so long..."

"He missed you terribly," Tony murmured. "He doesn't dare look at another omega half the time because he misses you so much. Oh Loki, it's good to see you. I don't know why, but I've been missing you so badly, so much worse... what happened the other night between us? It changed everything somehow..."

"Hush, don't worry, Tony. The other night we talked, and we exchanged our... our feelings. You

were rather passionate about yours,” Loki chuckled softly, reaching up to brush a bit of hair behind Tony’s ear, his fingers trailing lightly along Tony’s cheek. “You said you loved me and... you told me things you never had before about your childhood, your father. You explained why you’ve behaved as you have. Hush, hush it’s alright, your secrets are safe with me. I apologized to you, and you to I, and then I told you how I feel for you. Do you remember that at all? I told you, Tony, than I... Well, that I... We said that we loved each other.”

“We did?” Tony was a bit white, glancing at Steve. “I told you about my father?”

“It’s alright, I only think more highly of you now,” Loki hummed, combing his hands through Tony’s hair and rubbing lightly at his scalp. “You said you loved me, Tony. You said you did.”

“Well... Yes. Yes, I suppose if there is no hiding then I can tell you that I’ve ached to love you since we were just teens, and I never cared what designation you were. I... It’s not just any omega that I love, it’s you, no matter if you were a beta or even an alpha I don’t think I’d care and I’d love you just the same,” Tony hung his head, red with shame. “But you left me. It isn’t hard for me to know that my affections are not returned.”

“Tony,” Loki chuckled softly. “Did you not hear what I just said? We return each other’s affections. I love you, as well. Do you really mean that, though? That... that you wouldn’t care what I was? You wouldn’t care if I also like other omegas? What if I... what if I love you and Peter both. I’m sorry, but I do. And I love you both equally. You both mean to the world to me, but I thought I could never tell you because you were always with some other omega.”

“I wouldn’t care if you fell in love with a tree, I’d still love you the same,” Tony let out a wet little chuckle. “Loki, I can’t believe this... You felt that way and you still left me? I... God, Loki, this is so much to... to absorb. If my father knew I... Loki, I’m sorry if I drove you away or made you unhappy...”

“An apology? From you? My, this is a special day,” Loki chuckled softly, pulling Tony to the bed and letting him cuddle to the omega’s chest. Loki noticed that Steve had retreated to the bathroom, likely just to give them some privacy, and he chuckled softly. “I left for a reason, Tony. We don’t have all day, but we do have a while. I trust you since Steve trusts you. I’ll tell you my story so you can understand just as you told me yours the other night. Yes?”

“Please,” Tony whispered. “I want to hear.”

“Good,” Loki murmured. “Because finally I want to tell it.”

Sometimes I think I'm not that strong

But there's a force that carries me on

Sick of my small heart, made of steel

Sick of the wounds that never heal

'Cause I have lived my life in debt

I've spent my days in deep regret

Yeah, I've been living in the red

Cause I can't forgive and I can't forget

“So, Ki-Ki, what do you think of our room?” Loki tried not to jump as the Grandmaster’s voice echoed around the bedroom. Loki knew that staying with the Grandmaster would mean lots of sex with the alpha, but he hadn’t realized he’d be sleeping in the same bed as him every single night. The thought gave him goosebumps, but he didn’t his best to relax and grin as he turned.

“Beautiful,” he murmured. “So luxurious.”

“Hm, yes, only the best!” The Grandmaster beamed, pressing a sudden kiss to Loki’s lips that made the omega gag lightly.

“Grandmaster,” Loki chuckled, pushing his hands to the alpha’s chest. “I’ve just had a long journey from Stark’s Manor and I’ve had a... a long day. I think I’d best wait until tomorrow for such things.”

“Nonsense! Why put off ‘til tomorrow what can be done today!” The Grandmaster beamed, backing Loki up until his back hit the wall and he swallowed.

“Really, I think I should wait until tomorrow...”

“Oh, Lo-Lo, what’s wrong love? Are those tears? Don’t cry, darling. A good fuck will make it better, it always works on omegas, you’ll see,” the Grandmaster purred sympathetically, burrowing his nose in Loki’s neck.

“To be honest,” Loki finally snapped. “Nothing will make it better. My mother, she’s dead. I just found out. That’s why I’ve come here.”

“Oh, Lo-Lo... Darling, you’ve come to forget...” the Grandmaster purred softly. “Don’t worry, my dear. I have fine wine and champagne just imported from France waiting downstairs. We shall make our love to each other and then we shall have a big dinner and drink and I can give you a beautiful present, hm? Come on now, darling, don’t worry. I’ll help you forget and you’ll be so happy. Doesn’t that sound nice?”

“Well I... I suppose,” Loki sighed softly. “Yes, I suppose that will help me forget. But I want the wine right now, then you fuck me, then the dinner and the champagne. That’s my final offer.”

“Lo-Lo, sweet thing, don’t you know you don’t get to make offers here?” The Grandmaster chuckled. “But you’ve had a rough day. Just this once, you can decide that. I’ll get the wine, my dear, to celebrate our bonding.”

“Our what?” Loki paled three shades. “I never agreed to bond you.”

“But Lo-Lo, you came here to me, surely you want to be mine now!”

“I... The wine first, and then maybe I’ll just be drunk enough to make a decision like that,” Loki sighed. “Go on.”

“That’s the spirit,” the Grandmaster beamed, before dashing away and leaving Loki to fall back against the bed and rub at his bonding gland. He’d come here so that Tony and Peter could be happy, Loki reminded himself. He came here because he loved them more than life itself. And the Grandmaster was right, he could help him forget.

Loki sat up to look around the room. It truly was the most elegant, gorgeous room he had ever laid eyes on. The Grandmaster didn’t just have money, he was filthy rich, and all of this could be Loki’s if he just cooperated. But despite all that, he didn’t want to bond with the alpha. He wasn’t sure why he held back, perhaps it was some childish hope that Tony might still come and save him

from all of this. But now, Loki reminded himself, Tony would be better off this way, and so would Loki.

When the Grandmaster returned, Loki drank every glass of red wine handed to him, but he didn't feel nearly drunk enough. Still, the sex was rough enough that he could think on nothing else, yet when the Grandmaster's love bites moved closer and closer to Loki's bonding gland, he grew stiff.

"Not yet!" Loki suddenly cried softly, panting. "How... how about we save it for a special day? Wanna save something for you... It'll be a treat later. It'll make it taste sweeter then."

"Oh! Yes, I do like that idea!" The Grandmaster decided. "I have enough of you tonight. My, but you're, uh, tight despite everything hm? Little higher with those hips, Ki-Ki."

And so, by the time they were both finished, it was hard for Loki to think about anything but the soft ache all over his body. That night's dinner was cooked by a French gourmet chef who made the best food Loki had ever tasted, and the pink champagne left him giggling against the Grandmaster's chest. At the end of the night, Loki was carried upstairs and presented with three boxes tied with pretty bows.

"What's," Loki hiccuped. "What's all these, Grandmaster?"

"Your gifts, of course!" The Grandmaster smiled, sipping his wine. "Go on, love."

"Oh! A pretty fur coat! And it's so soft! And it goes all the way down so far!" Loki giggled happily, bouncing on the bed and stroking the fur coat that came out of the first box. He tore at the second box and gasped, "Diamond earrings!"

"One more, Lo," the Grandmaster smiled. "Go on!"

Loki tore at the third box, and he paused when his hands fell upon what was inside.

"A... a collar," Loki murmured.

"A diamond encrusted 24 karrot gold collar!" The Grandmaster beamed. "Isn't it lovely! I had this made the day I met you all those years ago because I just knew one day you'd be mine!"

"Oh," Loki murmured, much quieter now and suddenly feeling much more sober.

"What do you say, Lo?" The Grandmaster beamed.

"I think... I think I'll show you instead of saying anything," Loki murmured, setting the presents aside and instead melting into the grandmaster's arms. He pressed a kiss to the grandmaster's lips, and the alpha beamed, holding him close.

"That's more like it," he chuckled. "And there is more where that came from. You'll be so happy here, Lo, and you'll never want to leave. I know just how to, uh, make an omega like you so very happy! You'll forget you ever wanted anything else!"

"I'll forget," Loki murmured. "Yes, I'll forget..."

Forget, forget, forget, forget

Ain't no time for regret

Yeah, it's time to be letting go

Oh baby, you know

What I'm talking about

Got nothing to lose and nothing to prove

Oh baby, I'm bowing out

He was curled at the bottom of the bed when he heard the tap on the window. At first he thought it was the wind, but when he heard it again, Loki frowned and sat up, pulling his fur coat a little closer. The Grandmaster was out tonight at some club he owned downtown. Loki had been showered with presents since he got here and he spent most of his time half drunk on his favorite dry champagne.

It was better that way, easier to ignore when he overheard the Grandmaster talking to his business associates about how pretty the new omegas were when they begged to go home to the families they'd been stolen away from. Loki had the greatest of empathy for those omegas. He felt as though he'd been stolen away as well, though he was so drunk and fucked out by the end of each day there wasn't much time to think about what he'd lost and so he was rather blissful when he drifted off in the Grandmaster's arms.

The only time he'd had a true scare was when he heard the Grandmaster talking about taking Peter away. It had been late one night after the Grandmaster thought Loki had passed out. Indeed, Loki's head felt like it was stuffed full of cotton, but he'd gotten up to get a drink of water and froze when he heard someone say his prior lover's name. Through listening to the conversation, Loki learned that Peter was trying desperately to find him, and the boy was getting just a bit too close to learning dangerous secrets. Gast found Peter attractive, so he'd planned to kill two birds with one stone and simply abduct Peter for his club. Panicked, Loki had managed to get a letter out to Stark Manor to tell Peter to stop searching for him. He'd only gotten the letter out a few days prior, and suddenly Loki felt very sober and very afraid.

Loki pulled the fur coat a bit tighter and then stumbled over to the window. For a moment he was afraid Peter had been foolish enough to come here, though it begged the question of how he'd managed to get into the second story. Nervous, Loki peered out the window and squinted when for a long moment he didn't see anything. Then, suddenly, something black was blocking the street lamp, and Loki swallowed down a soft yelp when he spotted Bucky peering out of the tree next to the window.

Gulping, Loki pulled the window open as hissed, "Barnes? What are you doing here? Come on inside, hurry, before someone sees you! No one is home tonight except two servants and they're downstairs. What are you doing here? Did Peter send you?"

"Yes, in fact, he did," Bucky murmured, his voice just above a whisper as he looked Loki over clinically. "And I'm rather glad I've been sent. Are you alright, Loki? Has he hurt you?"

"Nothing I didn't ask for," Loki crossed his arms.

"Really?" Bucky was skeptical, and Loki swallowed once.

"I wanted to come here, it was my choice," Loki raised his chin proudly. "I... I'm happy here."

"Really?" Bucky clearly wasn't convinced. "And here I thought you didn't like collars anymore."

Loki swallowed, pulling his fur coat to better cover his collar as he sighed and looked away.

“Look, Loki, Peter and Tony are both worried sick about you,” Bucky murmured. “They wish for you to come home. Is there a reason you stay?”

“They are so much better off without me,” Loki murmured, pressing his eyes shut. “And I am better off here. This is my new life, it’s what an omega like me is meant to do.”

“An omega is meant to follow their heart, whoever they are,” Bucky murmured. “They’re meant to be where they are happy.”

“I’m happier here than I would be anywhere else,” Loki sighed as he sat on the bed. “This is the life I choose, and it’s my choice to make, not yours.”

“Of course it’s your choice, assuming this is truly a choice and not something you feel you have to do as some sick sort of self punishment,” Bucky sighed.

“I did this because I want to help Peter and Tony,” Loki insisted. “That’s why. I’m not like you, Bucky, no matter what you want to believe.”

“I think we’re more alike than you want to admit,” Bucky replied gently. “But no matter. Loki, are you truly happy here? I can bring you home where you’ll be safe. I’ve been with an alpha like Gast before. I know it feels addicting but it’s dangerous and one day he could snap and that would be it for you. I don’t mean to scare you, I just want you to know that I’ve been there and I can help you leave if you want to.”

“I... This is the right thing to do,” Loki murmured. “For Peter and for Tony, and for me. I’ve been able to forget some of the world here, although... I will admit that my life has been relatively charmed, but I have heard tell of others with far less than me.”

“What do you mean?” Bucky frowned, leaning closer.

“I can’t tell you. I know that if I do then you’ll end up ruining everything for me. You’ll swoop in, save those omegas, and my charmed life of forgetting will be over.”

“And what, you’re willing to stand by while something happens to innocent omegas?” Bucky snapped, his eyes flashing.

“I’d rather not, but I’m not certain I can trust you,” Loki replied softly. “I know you mean well, but you have a history...”

“Most of my history is made up by alphas who want to scare the public into submission,” Bucky crossed his arms. “I have my own secrets, Loki. I know how to work stealth, how to work undercover. If I swear that I won’t ruin this life for you will you work with me?”

“So eager,” Loki chuckled his tongue. “You don’t even know that I have useful information for you.”

“Somehow I truly suspect that you do,” Bucky replied sharply. “Do we have a deal?”

“Perhaps,” Loki hummed. “You know, I don’t truly care quite so much about this life in and of itself as I do about... I don’t know, it’s hard to explain. I think I spent too many years as everyone’s second choice. I spent many years as the omega that alphas came to when their steady partner refused to accommodate some bedroom desire. Here Gast treats me like I matter... And yet the things I’ve heard about truly... truly shake me. I don’t think I ever realized how bad it could be. And whenever I hear him talking about those omegas I just think of Peter and... and what could have happened to him if someone hadn’t been there to keep him safe.”

"I know first hand how bad it can be," Bucky murmured. "People talk about hell like it's still far away, but I know there can be hell on Earth. Peter is lucky he was granted such a good life, but many omegas are left clawing their way up for just a bit of air before they're forced back underwater. I nearly lost my arm once when it was tied in a bad position for too long. I only managed to keep it because a servant noticed the color it was turning when she came in the room to dust. Other omegas aren't so lucky, and they don't get saved."

"Gast? He's working for Hydra," Loki sighed. "It's here, in Europe. Hydra is spreading like a disease. So far I've only found that Gast is working here in England buying omegas for his club and selling them to the highest bidder when he tires of them, but I know he's working with Hydra."

"It's here in England?" Bucky paled, and for the first time in his life, Loki wondered if Bucky was truly frightened of something. "I thought Hydra was wiped out when Steve caught my mast-, uh, the head of Hydra in America."

"I'm sorry I don't know more," Loki sighed softly. "In fact I know very little. But I... I do know that there's a big underground market here in England. There's a pretty big turn over. Since I've been here there's been over a dozen bought or sold. I don't know where they get all of them. I suspect they're not all British but I can't say for sure. I... I could try to find out more for you, but if I do you have to swear to me that you'll keep Peter safe. They spoke about taking him. It's why I sent that letter. They knew he was looking for me so they were plotting to abduct him."

"I won't let that happen," Bucky promised. "I'll keep Peter safe. Thank you, Loki, you've been incredibly helpful."

"You'll keep Peter safe? Then... Then I'll work with you. My life has meant very little up until now. For the most part I was either a noble or a slut and no one truly cared what became of me."

"Don't say that, it isn't true," Bucky murmured.

"If I slipped away now, no one would be the wiser," Loki murmured. "But perhaps my life can mean more than what it has in the past. Gast treats me like his queen, but truly he is a monster. I want to help those omegas. I want to work with you. I trust you, do not betray that trust."

"I swear to you that I won't," Bucky shook his head. "I wouldn't."

"I know," Loki chuckled. "You are many things, but your character and your motivations are true. I have meant very little, but if I can help them then I will stand by and help you. Gast thinks I'm very stupid and it's easy for me to overhear his conversations. I can keep in contact with you, tell you about his moves, and anything more I know about Hydra. We'll find a way to communicate, yes? Perhaps with coded messages placed outside these windows somewhere. There's a planter box, perhaps there's some way to hide message there."

"Thank you, Loki," Bucky breathed. "You don't know what this means to me."

"I think I do," Loki smiled. "Or I think I'm beginning to. I don't want to be the person I once was, but I don't want recognition either. This is our secret. I don't trust people, but I'll trust you and I trust Captain Rogers. There was never a more earnest alpha. Tell him, perhaps he can help us."

"Thank you, Loki," Bucky murmured. "Perhaps no one will know, but that makes you no less of a hero."

"I'm not a hero," Loki chuckled softly. "I'm simply a little less selfish now than I used to be. Now you should go. I don't know when he'll be back, but he always comes running up here. Keep Peter

safe, please? And Bucky? Thank you for saving me.”

“You’re still here, I haven’t saved you,” Bucky murmured. “But... you’re welcome. I’m glad I could help. Just tell me if you ever need to pull out. Your safety is more important.”

“I can look after myself,” Loki chuckled. “Now go on. I’ll be fine. Keep Peter safe and I... I’ll keep an open ear.”

Yeah, I've been dancing with the devil

I love that he pretends to care

If I'll ever get to heaven

When a million dollars gets you there

Oh, all the time that I have wasted

Chasing rabbits down a hole

When I was born to be the tortoise

I was born to walk alone

“And so,” Loki murmured with a smile. “For two years that’s exactly what I’ve done. At first it was mostly about protecting Peter and easing my conscious of knowing so much about his black market. Now, though, I don’t really ever want to stop. I’ve gone through life with no purpose, Tony, and it leaves you feeling so empty. But now, darling, I’ve found my passion and it makes me truly happy to know that what I’m doing could be helping others. I don’t want or need recognition and I know I’ll never get it, but that makes this no less wonderful. I’ve had riches and fame and recognition, but I know this is better. I wasn’t very good at being around your group, but I did begin to believe the things you said. Omegas should be equal, and should be free. I know Peter would be happy and proud if he knew everything I’ve done, and that drives me on. Before I left I started wondering if there was some way I could help, but I never thought someone like me could make anything happen. I’m very happy to be proven wrong. This is the life I want, Tony. I’m making a difference for the first time in my life, and I can never go back.”

Tony swallowed hard as he gazed at Loki. So incredibly gently, Tony reached up to brush Loki’s hair out of the way. Loki flinched when Tony’s fingers brushed against Loki’s bonding gland, anger filling his gaze.

“He bonded you,” Tony growled softly. “You said you didn’t want him to. You... you’re his now.”

“Oh Tony,” Loki chuckled softly, running a hand through Tony’s hair and down to the nape of his neck. “I’m not his, I’m my own person and I always will be. Yes, I allowed him to bond me the night after I became a spy for Bucky. I wanted it to solidify my place here so that he would trust me as his mate. It worked, and I’ve been able to hear very useful information.”

“I didn’t notice before,” Tony frowned. “I should’ve noticed before...”

“Hush, no, I take little pills to mask that I’ve been bonded,” Loki smiled. “I wouldn’t be a very useful prostitute if everyone knew I was bonded. It would make me less desirable. But don’t worry, Tony. Just because he bit my neck like the vampire he is doesn’t mean I am his. I am my own person, and one day, perhaps... Perhaps I could still be yours.”

“You mean that?” Tony murmured, pulling Loki a little closer as he studied him. Loki smiled and whimsically kissed the bridge of Tony’s nose.

“I do mean that,” Loki murmured. “I’ve meant everything I’ve said today. I’ve changed, Tony, I’ve changed for the better. Yes, I’ve been used and abused and torn apart and put together again, but I’m helping so many omegas. At times I question myself. At times I consider leaving, but then I remember what’s truly happening down stairs and I force myself to stay and be a person Peter could be proud of.”

“Peter misses you, he wants you home,” Tony murmured.

“I miss him too,” Loki chuckled softly. “More than words can describe... I missed both of you. Perhaps you can bring him and say you want a threesome. Lots of people do that. I’ve had sex with more omegas than I can count while I’ve been here. Sometimes an alpha just likes to watch me have sex with their omega, it gets them off. Bring him, please? I... I want to see him again. You don’t have to tell him the bad things I’ve been through. Just tell him I’m happy, okay? Tell him I’m helping omegas and... and that I’m happy. You don’t know how good it is to see you again Tony...”

“Right back at you, Reindeer Games,” Tony chuckled, laughing softly when Loki pushed him.

“Hey!” Loki giggled. “Just cause I had a phase of enjoying that silly hat as a child doesn’t mean you have to call me that forever!”

“Not forever,” Tony grinned. “Just until you can’t stand it anymore. Hey!”

Tony laughed softly as Loki began to tickle his stomach, making Tony curl into a ball, laughing and smiling.

“Give up yet?” Loki demanded, grinning as he pinned Tony down. “Give up?”

Tony blinked when he realized Loki had ended up with a knee on either side of his stomach, and Tony smiled up at him, before turning and kissing the inside of Loki’s wrists and murmuring, “I give myself up to you, Lokes.”

Loki chuckled softly, finally letting him go and rolling to the side to muss his hair a little more.

“You should probably go,” Loki murmured. “We’ve taken a long time. Remember, we had long and wonderful sex, okay?”

“Amazing,” Tony rolled his eyes. “Best sex I’ve ever had.”

“That’s the spirit,” Loki chuckled.

“Loki, stay safe,” Tony hesitated. “I... I’m not the best at saying this, but I care about you, okay?”

“You care about me?” Loki raised an eyebrow.

“Okay, I love you, and leaving you is so damn hard. Just... be here next time, okay? Cause if I leave and something happens to you then I know I won’t forgive myself,” Tony crossed his arms.

“Bring Peter next time,” Loki smiled. “And I... I love you as well. That doesn’t mean I’m ready to be your omega or anything like that. You and I don’t have the best history, and I’m not someone who can jump into something as strange as love. I admit that I’ve been broken, Tony, but one day there may be hope for us. I’ll miss you.”

“May I kiss you?” Tony murmured, one hand reaching up to caress Loki’s cheek, but the omega pulled away.

“Maybe next time,” Loki smiled. “Now go on, and don’t forget Steve. I’ll see you soon, yes?”

“Yes,” Tony smiled. “You owe me a kiss.”

“I don’t owe you a thing,” Loki chuckled. “You alphas are all the same sometimes. No, actually that isn’t true, you’re extra annoying.”

“That’s why you love me,” Tony grinned, though Loki could easily see the slight nervous wavering there, so he smiled and nodded.

“That’s why I love you,” Loki reassured him. “Now go on. I love you Tony.”

He smiled as Tony and Steve left him there, curled up on his big canopy bed, and he smiled, running his hands over the spot where moments before Tony had been sitting.

I'm gonna leave the past behind

I've had enough, I'm breaking free

No pressing stop, erase, rewind

That chain of thought that followed me

I've put my money where my mouth is

For the first time in my life

I've made mistakes, but I believe that

Everything was worth the fight

'Cause in the end, the road is long

But only 'cause it makes you strong

It's filled with peaks and twists and turns

Sometimes you have to learn to forget about it

Chapter End Notes

So, that is the full story of what Loki has been up to. What do you think? Will is last for a long time, will he come home to Peter? Thanks for your comments, they always make me smile :)

Gold

Chapter Notes

Thanks again to LokisLonleyLady for editing this and continuing to support this story.
Your ideas are always appreciated!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Don't think I want what I used to want

Don't think I need what I used to need

Don't think I want what I used to want

Don't think I see what I used to see

I've been waiting, waiting for the penny to drop

I've been working, working to get back what I lost

But whatever happens, I'll be okay

Now, there's no moral to this story

But I can hear my freedom calling me

Somehow, it felt like a weight had been lifted from Loki's shoulders. The Grandmaster used him no less, and Loki performed two more shows, yet underneath the act Loki put on for the alphas, there was a warm swelling in his chest. Tony truly loved him, and he'd said he would bring Peter to visit. The thought of seeing Peter again made Loki's heart soar no less than the knowledge that after all this there might still be a life for him with Alpha Stark. Loki didn't like to think that he was a romantic, but he loved them both desperately. More than that, speaking with Tony solidified Loki's feelings about this whole endeavor. It solidified that Loki was doing a good thing to help others, and the knowledge that he could help omegas like Carina, or like Peter might have been, ignited a burning flame inside of Loki.

For the first time, he struggled to keep all of his secrets during his visit with Hela. He'd always enjoyed the visits with his sister, and he truly wanted to trust her. He wasn't sure what held him back from this trust, but he always felt that there could be something off, so he held back all the secrets of his double life.

"You seem distracted," Hela murmured today, lifting her glass casually to her lips. "Are you alright, brother?"

"Yes, I'm sorry," Loki flushed, ducking his head. "I suppose I was just thinking about how unfortunate it is that I could not have known you as a child. Did you ever even truly get to know Thor?"

"Sadly no," Hela murmured. "Is he worth knowing? He seemed sweet as a baby, but you speak little of him, and he is a noble alpha... And he is Odin's son."

“He is all of those things and more,” Loki chuckled softly. “He is foolish, a bit brutish, a complete clod, and yet... When I left him he was kind, open hearted, and... I always said he might become just like the rest, but he didn’t used to be. His heart was truly in the right place.”

“Perhaps I shall meet them, one day, when Odin is gone and can no longer ban me from my family,” Hela murmured. “I should like to meet both my little brothers.”

Loki opened his mouth to say more, but he was interrupted when the door burst open and Gast paraded in with a beaming smile.

“Hela, darling, so good to see you! Loki, my pet, go get dressed, you have a client,” Gast waved Loki towards the door, but the omega hesitated.

“Now?” Loki murmured. “You’ve never interrupted my talks with my sister before, darling. Who is here?”

“Well believe it or not it is Lord Stark! And he provided a pretty penny for you to have an... escapade with him and his omega,” the Grandmaster winked. “Run along, this will pay for your new lovely pearl earrings... go on!”

“Stark’s omega?” Hela murmured, nodding at Loki to stand up. “Do you mean omega Peter? Oh, Loki dear, I remember him!”

“You’ve met him?” Gast blinked. “Cute isn’t he? I just want to... eat him up!”

“Indeed,” Hela murmured, giving Loki a side eye. “He is rather... adorable. I am surprised Stark would bring him here. I thought you and Stark had fallen out of touch, Loki?”

“We did,” Loki murmured. “But he came to the club and saw me. He... He wants to take advantage of the feelings I once had for him. He has a thing for making love instead just sex. Last time he came he mentioned wanting to try two omegas and I guess now is the time...”

“You know I’d like to meet Peter again,” Hela murmured, setting her drink aside standing slowly. She moved towards Loki, who chuckled and took a step back.

“Perhaps some other time,” Loki told her smoothly. “I should not keep Lord Stark waiting.”

“Of course not,” Hela smiled, tilting her head. “Run along and I’ll see you later, hm?”

“Yes... I’ll see you later, sister,” Loki provided her with a thin lipped smile before dashing upstairs. He paused outside the bedroom, taking a few deep breaths and smoothing out his gown before he stepped inside. He had to suppress a yelp when a blur of color flew across the room and he was enveloped in warm, snug arms as kisses were pressed into his neck.

“It’s you, it’s really you Loki,” Peter’s voice met his ears, and Loki chuckled, smiling as he pulled back far enough to place a kiss on Peter’s forehead.

“It’s really me,” Loki smiled, smoothing back the boy’s hair. He let out a low whistle and shook his head, murmuring, “Darling... you’ve grown.”

“You look just the same,” Peter murmured. “Beautiful.”

“You’ve been teaching him?” Loki chuckled softly, looking over at Tony who shrugged helplessly.

“I can’t help if the kid has picked up some pointers,” Tony grinned. “Hello Loki. It’s good to see

you. I hope this wasn't a bad time? Gast said you had company."

"Yes..." Loki bit his lip, casting a glance at Peter. "Don't concern yourself over it. We must be quiet, though, for I fear we are suspected of something... come, sit, both of you. It has been so long and I suspect you may have questions, Peter? You don't know how happy I am to see you... But Tony hasn't let you out of his sight, has he? To be perfectly honest, it isn't completely safe for you here."

"I don't care what's safe or not," Peter murmured. "I wanted to see you. I've missed you so much... and I have to apologize. Loki, I never wanted to drive you away. I fear that I did, and I'm so sorry. I loved you then and I love you now. I was so stupid to act like I did... You're the only one I've ever felt that way about, not Tony, not anyone. Please, I'm so sorry."

"Hey, hey it's alright," Loki murmured, reaching to tenderly thumb the tears from Peter's cheeks. "I left because I needed some time, and this has been the best thing I have ever done. I do not like it, not at all, but for the first time I am working towards a good cause. Peter, I am finally the omega you always wanted me to be."

"That's not true," Peter murmured. "You already were the omega I wanted you to be. You didn't need to change anything to make me love you more. Nothing you do could change how I feel."

"You really have rubbed off on him," Loki chuckled softly, glancing at Tony. He grinned and pulled Peter back into his arms, pressing a firm kiss to his lips and murmuring, "You've turned into such a romantic."

"All I needed was a little... push," Peter grinned, shoving Loki onto the bed where he nearly landed in Tony's lap, and he chuckled softly, flushing and standing quickly, a soft apology on his lips. Tony was also blushing and he nodded, dusting himself off.

Peter looked between the two of them and frowned slightly, helping Loki up.

"Hey, I'm sorry," Peter murmured. "I thought the two of you were... you know, now. I thought the two of you could use a little push too."

"I want to take it slow," Loki explained softly. "Peter, you and I have truly experienced everything of each other. I... No longer feel confused as to how our relationship lies. Tony and I? We are still learning what we could be to one another."

"What he said," Tony chuckled, nodding at Loki once and moving to hold his hand. Loki allowed him to, pressing a kiss against his knuckles before sitting beside him on the bed.

"Tony says you're a spy," Peter murmured softly. "I spoke to Bucky... I can't believe everything you've done."

"If I know Bucky, he hasn't told you the half of it," Loki chuckled softly. "He and I are both good about keeping secrets. But yes, I have been a spy for a little less than two years now. Perhaps I didn't need to prove anything to you, but I did need to prove something to myself. I grew up believing I was one thing, and it threw my life for a spin when I found out I was something else. I grew up trying my hardest to be a proper, noble alpha, to be seen as higher than all others, to have my place respected. I cared only for my title, and the money and glory I could bring my family name. But when I met you, Peter, things began to change. I've learned there are more important things than a title. Not everyone has the world's respect, but everyone should have respect, and I've found that so many omegas are used as toys for alphas amusement. I once looked at you as my toy, Peter. I had to know that I'm not like that anymore. I had to solidify that I want to stop such

treatment. I had to prove something to myself. And I think I finally have.”

“I’m so proud of you,” Peter murmured, pulling him into another hug. “You’re a hero.”

“No I’m not,” Loki chuckled.

“You are,” Peter replies, pressing a kiss to his lips and murmuring, “You’re my hero if nothing else.”

“I thought Tony was your hero?” Loki grinned, and Peter laughed softly.

“Him? Nah, between you and me he can be kind of a jerk sometimes.”

“Hey!” Tony laughed, gently reaching across Loki to push Peter. All of this felt like a dream, it felt like heaven, and Loki beamed for a moment before his smile wavered.

“Speaking of heroes,” Loki murmured. “How is my brother? I didn’t dare contact him while I was here and he never wrote me, not once...”

“He’s...” Tony shared an uneasy look with Peter. “He doesn’t leave the manor anymore. I’m not certain I’ve seen him outside more than a handful of times since you left. He keeps a vigil at Odin’s side, refuses to do anything but care for his father. Odin is much the same, or so I’m told. They don’t have parties anymore. Odin Manor is falling into disrepair. In the handful of times I have seen Thor, he seemed... unhappy, but he has not lost hope. He loves Odin dearly, and he will not rest while his father is still alive. Anyway, Thor told me that he has sworn to keep the village running in his father’s memory. The village is, in fact, still doing well. While Thor’s own world falls apart, the world he cares for flourishes. Shuri keeps his spirits alive, I think, and I believe T’Challa visits when he can. I tried, but Odin doesn’t like it and so Thor has told me not to come...”

“What of his friends?” Loki frowned. “Thor used to go hunting with them every weekend.”

“I hear that they’ve seen him very few times of late,” Tony sighed. “He says he has a duty to his father and to the village and so he claims he doesn’t have time to see them anymore. I don’t think it’s very good for him.”

“Really?” Loki spat. “No, it sounds to me like he’s doing just wonderfully!”

“Look, I’m not sure what I could have done-“

“Aren’t you his friend?” Loki spat softly. “He’s a bumbling idiot but he is also my brother and although I’ve wished him gone at times it sounds like he’s suffering some kind of hell. You should go talk to him, please? Just... get him out of the house and on a horse, I’m sure it’ll set his mind right.”

“He is alright really,” Tony sighed. “Just... very set on his duty.”

“For two years with little to no social interaction?” Loki huffed. “He will eventually crash and burn. It’s like everything when he was a child. He would grow so attached to something that when that thing changed he utterly fell apart. He’s apt to do that. First it was his favorite horse. You remember, Tony. It got sick and he sat by its side every night, hand feeding it until it inevitably died and then Thor would eat nothing but sweets for two weeks because he couldn’t save his horse until mother straightened him out. Promise me you’ll pay him a visit?”

“We will,” Peter interjected. “I promise.”

“Good,” Loki nodded once. “Now, I’ve tried getting the news about this show you two are putting on, but shockingly the alphas don’t like telling me about your science during sex! Anyway, I’d like to hear it from you.”

Peter chuckled softly, pressing close as he broke into an explanation about the Stark Expo. Their talk lasted a good amount of time, but eventually Loki realized that this session was going on rather long, so he pressed a good long kiss to Peter’s lips, instructing the omega to muss him up like they’d had sex. Loki returned the favor, and they shared a second long kiss before Loki told them they should leave.

“I look forward to next time,” Loki murmured, smiling warmly at them both. “You don’t know what this means to me...”

“Untrue,” Tony grinned, moving to press a kiss to the palm of Loki’s hand. “It means an incredible amount to me as well.”

Loki and Tony shared a long look which was interrupted only by Peter giving Loki one last hug. Their parting was bittersweet, but Loki’s chest had an even bigger warmth swelling in it. He tried to hide the bounce in his step as he made his way back downstairs to Hela, who provided him with a half smile.

“Have fun?” Hela murmured, looking him up and down. Loki pushed down a flush and instead simply shrugged.

“I suppose,” Loki murmured, sitting cross legged. “Now where were we?”

Hela’s visits became slightly more frequent, though Loki wasn’t really complaining. She always brought him something nice and she allowed him respect during their conversations, something that was a rare commodity for Loki. They spoke about everything and nothing while Loki waited patiently for Tony and Peter’s return. He heard from Bucky often as well. The omega was convinced he had found another Hydra agent, and so Loki did his best to find out everything he could about the alpha. Through casual conversation Loki found out that it seemed that Hela knew the alpha, and Loki found out that she had a cabin near the coast in Wales which Loki directed Bucky to check.

It was Friday now and, once again, Hela was visiting for tea. They’d been speaking for some time about nothing in particular and Loki hummed softly as she spoke about some omega girl’s antics at her business. According to Hela, the girl was infatuated with one of the clients, though the client couldn’t care less for her.

“Very sad,” Hela murmured, dusting powdered sugar off her upper lip. “She thinks the alpha will sweep her up and take her away to some beautiful manor, but it’s all a silly fantasy. She should know that omegas like her are not destined for something as silly as love.”

“She can dream, and maybe one day someone will care for her,” Loki murmured, stirring his tea cup absently.

“She is a prostitute,” Hela chuckled. “You and I have many chances to fall in love. No alpha will ever truly care about her. But I always tell her, she has her omega brothers and sisters, and she has me.”

“Indeed,” Loki hummed softly, continuing to gaze down into his tea cup. He was going to open his

mouth to say something more when a knock sounded at the door. His eyebrows pulled together as he called out, "Yes? Who is it? Enter."

A servant stepped inside, bowing deeply before murmuring, "Omega Loki? I have an urgent message from your brother."

"My brother?" Loki blinked, glancing quickly at Hela. "I have not heard from him in two years..."

"He asks that you come to Odin Manor immediately," the servant murmured. "He says it's Lord Odin. Lord Odin is dying."

"He's... what?" Loki paled. For a moment, it was like the world had faded from existence, only to be replaced just as quickly by an excess of information. The crackling fire in the hearth was now roaring in his ears, the lights in the room much too bright while Hela's voice sounded very far away.

"Loki!" She shook him lightly, and finally Loki blinked and looked up at her. His eyes looked like those of a lost little boy, and she clucked her tongue softly, pulling him into a tender hug and pressing a kiss against the top of his head. "Oh, you poor dear. I know he was a terrible alpha, but he was also our father..."

"I have to go to him," Loki murmured. "You... you should come too! He was your father too!"

"Oh, Loki," Hela murmured softly. "You must go, yes, I shall give Gast an excuse that he cannot push aside. But Loki, seeing me in his last moments would only give Odin pain. You must go alone. Perhaps I shall follow, but this is something you have to do. I'll call a carriage."

She hugged him once more before she left him curled up on the couch, wrapping his arms around his middle.

"Excuse me?" Loki suddenly called to the servant. "Can you send a message to Lord Stark and the omega Peter? Please tell them to meet me at Odin Manor?"

"Yes, Omega Loki," the servant bowed. "At once."

Loki swallowed hard, watching as the servant scurried away and he was then left alone. Everything felt numb, far away, detached. He wasn't even particularly upset, he thought, and yet when he touched the velvet sofa it felt like sandpaper under his finger tips.

"The carriage is here," Hela spoke, poking her head back in the room. "Come, little brother, you must go."

"Are you certain you don't want to come?" Loki murmured.

"I shall follow," Hela decided. "I'll arrive after you. But go on now, brother, you must leave."

Loki nodded once, thanking her before he stepped into the carriage. He watched as Gast's mansion faded into the smog of London, and quite suddenly he felt very far away from the character he had created for himself. He still felt a better person than he ever had been in the past, but in an equal portion he felt like a frightened little boy who had made a mistake so terrible that he would be locked in his room for the next week with no dinner. He knew the cabbie could not see him here in the carriage, so Loki curled his knees to his chest and buried his face there, pressing his eyes shut as he tried his best to block out the world.

He used to want to be like his father, Loki thought to himself. Odin was the image of power,

nobility, respectability, but all of that had come crashing down when Loki learned the truth about his birth. The amazing, noble alpha Loki had come to see as his father had suddenly gone sour in his eyes. It was Loki's actions that had driven his father to have his accident, and if he was being honest with himself, Loki hadn't been entirely upset about that. Yes, Odin was his father, but in some awful corner of his mind Loki had been convinced that the accident was no less than he deserved.

Now, though, with the knowledge that he might be dying, Loki felt his insides twisting in a knot. He remembered the way his father had laughed at Thor's antics as a child. He remembered the family picnics they'd taken together on spring afternoons by the stream, accompanied by Frigga's excellent chocolate biscuits. He remembered his father telling him that he could make something great of himself, that he was destined to marry a noble alpha and carry on the family line. Loki knew that his father would be only disappointed by what Loki had turned his life into, and yet somehow he couldn't make himself feel guilty for that. Loki knew he was a better person now, even if his father could never see that.

When the carriage rolled up to Odin Manor, Loki's jaw dropped in shock at the image that met him. The gardens were overgrown and dying, ivy curling its way up the side of the house and pulling at the bricks. Only Frigga's rose garden was still intact, and it bloomed like an island of beauty surrounded by desolation. The front steps of the manor were cracked, and Loki winced as he stepped out of the carriage and nearly slipped on a loose stone.

"Thank you, driver," Loki murmured, pulling some coins from his pocket and handing it over quickly. He suppressed a shiver as he made his way up the front steps and then used the rusted door knocker to summon someone to open the door. He had to wait only a moment before Peter pulled the door open, and Loki's eyes widened.

"Thank goodness you're here," Peter murmured, pulling Loki into a hug. "Your father, he is fading fast. We got your message and came here in the auto as quick as we could. Tony is making hot tea and Bruce and your brother are upstairs. You should go there now."

"What happened, do you know?" Loki murmured softly, stepping through the musty hallway towards the staircase.

"Thor was bringing him to see your mother's roses and I guess he just collapsed... Go on, you should hurry," Peter murmured, pressing a kiss to Loki's cheek and murmuring, "We'll have hot tea waiting for you."

Loki nodded stiffly, pressing down an irresponsible notion to run from the manor and pretend none of this was happening. Instead, he dutifully ascended the stairs, jumping when he saw his reflection in a cracked mirror and wincing when one of the stairs creaked loudly. The hallway was dark, but Loki knew the way to his father's room by heart. The floor creaked again and Loki jumped, pressing his eyes shut as something flashed at the corner of his eye. It was a swish of pale blue skirts, a memory of his mother telling one of their servants to fix a tear in the carpet near here before a guest could see it. The manor had always been shining while she was alive, and suddenly Loki ached for her to step out of one of the empty doorways and pull him into her arms, whispering quiet reassurances. It was like she could still be here, upstairs in her sitting room working on a quilt and waiting for Loki to run upstairs to tell her some fantastical story. He swallowed hard and pushed the feeling away as he approached his parent's, no, father's room, and he knocked only once.

"Yes?" The door was pulled open, and Loki smiled weakly when Dr Banner sighed and stepped aside, murmuring, "Loki, it's good to see you. Are you alright from your journey? Come, your

father is in bed. He's... in a bad way. Have you been told?"

"Yes," Loki whispered. "I understand."

His head was held high and he was the picture of composure as he stepped towards the large canopy bed. He spotted Thor sitting there, Odin's hand held tightly in his own. He managed to hold himself together until Odin looked up, his face as ashen as snow, yet a smile stretched across his face.

"My son," Odin's voice was paper thin, one hand reaching, shaking, towards Loki. "Loki, my littlest son, you have finally come to see me..."

Tears overflowed on Loki's cheeks, and he swallowed hard, biting his lower lip so hard that it began to bleed. He sniffles as he nodded, stepping over and sitting on the bed next to his father's right side.

"Yes," Loki whispered. "I... father, I have come."

"Good, that is good," Odin murmured, taking his hand from Thor's and clasping one of Loki's hands in both of his own. He smiled weakly and pressed a kiss to Loki's knuckles, smiling sadly as he murmured, "It is good to see you one last time, at the end of all things."

"Father?" Loki whispered softly, pushing down a soft sob. "Why? Why did you call for me now? I thought I had... I thought you no longer cared for me."

"Oh, Loki," Odin smiled sadly, slowly shaking his head. "You will not understand until you have a child. Despite all my anger, you will always be my son."

Loki sniffles as Odin smiled weakly at him before he turned back to Thor who's eyes were red with tears. Thor stares at Loki for a long moment before he looked back down to his father, clearing his throat softly.

"Father, this is not the end," Thor insisted. "You still have life left to live. We... we didn't get to see all of mother's roses."

"Oh, Thor," Odin chuckled. "Where I am going there will be the most beautiful rose garden I have ever seen. Your mother, she calls me. I miss her, don't you? It lightens my heart that I shall soon see her again."

"No, father, please," Thor swallowed hard. "You have so much left to do. I am still reading you that book about mythology, we are not at the end yet! You said you planned to begin writing your will again since you never finished it, you said you wanted to go to the river one last time. We haven't gone to the river one last time."

Loki pressed his eyes shut as tears rolled silently down his cheeks and Odin chuckled softly, reaching to wipe first Thor's, and then Loki's tears.

"You shall go to the river together, my sons, and you shall remember me," Odin murmured.

"Remember the times we had there. Remember your mother, and I. You are both my sons. Take care of your mother's roses? They are so precious, but never as precious as both of you, my sons..."

"Father?" Thor murmured as Odin's hand went limp in his own, and any remaining color drained from Thor's face as he cried out, "Father! Father, no please, we still have so much! We still have so much, father! Please... please..."

Loki pressed his eyes shut again trying to block out the sounds of his brother's sobs as two tears ran their way down his cheeks. He swallowed hard as Bruce pulled Thor into a hug, holding him as the man sobbed, shaking his head and trembling all over. Loki found he could not watch, so he turned his attention back to Odin. Loki swallowed hard as he gently closed the old man's eyes and then pressed a kiss to his forehead.

"Goodnight, father," Loki whispered. "Please tell mother I love her..."

He bit his lips together as he pulled the sheet over his father's body, turning away so that none could see the silent sobs that rocked his body. The room echoed with Thor's soft whimpers as Dr Banner finally let him go, and Thor stood, moving to Loki's side.

"Please," Loki whispered. "Don't speak to me right now. I need time to grieve in my own way. Please, Thor..."

Thor opened his mouth, but then he closed it and nodded once, sniffing softly. Still he sat by Loki's side and pressed a hand to Loki's shoulder, tears bubbling over onto his cheeks, and Loki sighed, smiling sadly as he nodded once.

"I missed you too," Loki murmured. "But we are together now, and I think... I think that is what would make father happy."

When Thor dissolved into another round of soft sobs, Loki smiled sadly and took pity on his brother, pulling him into a hug. He rocked Thor, pressing a kiss against his hair.

"Loki," Thor whispered. "We... we never got to finish seeing the rose garden. He said he just wanted to see it one more time..."

"Hush," Loki murmured. "He is in the most beautiful rose garden in the world now, remember? And we'll care for mother's roses. We'll make them beautiful. We'll make them all bloom."

"Excuse me?" The brothers looked up as Bruce hesitated by the door, shifting uneasily. "I'm so sorry, but there is someone outside. The servant says she is to come in? He says her name is Hela."

"Who?" Thor blinked. "Who is that?"

"She came?" Loki murmured, looking up. "She is too late..."

"Who is she?" Thor murmured, pulling himself together best he could. "Loki?"

"She... she's our sister," Loki murmured. "I... I know it is hard to understand but we have a sister, Odin's eldest. She is your older sister. I met her in London and... and I told her she could come, but father is already gone."

"I have a sister?" Thor blinked, wiping the tears from his cheeks that Loki only now noticed were covered in a new beard. "An older sister?"

"Yes..." Loki licked his lips. "It is hard to explain... But yes. She may enter."

"Loki," Thor murmured, face growing uneasy. "Father would have said if I had a sister. This makes no sense. Loki, something is wrong..."

"So!" Loki looked up as Hela's voice rang through the room. "At long last, Odin is dead?"

"Hela! Yes... yes, father is gone," Loki blinked, frowning as an uneasy feeling took him. "What..."

Hela? Are you alright?”

“Oh, you poor little things,” Hela chuckled, her long black coat trailing behind her as she smirked. “I am much more than alright. Stand, and get out.”

“Excuse me?” Loki blinked in shock, his hand tightening around Thor’s bicep.

“You heard me,” Hela glared. “Get out of my house.”

“Your house?” Thor spat, standing up to his full height. “This Manor is mine, I am Odin’s eldest alpha son! What is going on?”

“Silly little alpha, such a simpleton,” Hela shook her head, smirking. “Odin never finished his second will, did he? If you want to inherit anything you must be sure about it. Odin’s first will named me as his sole inheritor, and I ensured that he never wrote another. It is easy when you have Odin’s most trusted servants under your thumb. All of this that you see? It is now mine. But come, perhaps you must be further explained to. Come, little brothers, it is time for a bedtime story, only this story is entirely the truth.”

Chapter End Notes

I might update twice this week, but we’ll see :) Anyway... Odin is dead and Hela is beginning to reveal her true colors... What do you think her ‘story’ could be? And what do you think she has planned... Because she certainly has a plan

Rootless

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

I'm a stray cat on the roam

Choking on a chicken bone

For a home sweet, no sweet home

For a root, for a leaf, for a branch, for a tree

For something, somebody, that reminded them of me

Running with my roots pulled up

Caught me cold so they could cut

What there was left of love

I'm rootless, I'm rootless

Both Thor and Loki fiddled uneasily, a hateful glare on Thor's face while Loki pulled at a loose string on his shirt. Dr Banner was upstairs preparing Odin's body for burial and Peter now sat to Loki's right, watching Hela uneasily. Tony, meanwhile, had been barred from the room by the two beta servants. He'd put up a fuss, but ultimately the beta servants somehow had swords and Tony certainly did not, so he was now standing outside. Hela, meanwhile, was calmly sipping a cup of hot tea and leering over at the brothers, Munninn standing stiffly on her right with the will gripped tightly in his hands.

"You're sure you don't want some tea, dear brothers? No? That's alright," Hela purred, reaching for the teapot, taking off the lid, and pouring the entirety of the tea onto the chair where Odin used to sit by the fire. Thor's face twisted in anger, but Loki reached over to squeeze his knee reassuringly.

"Hela, what is the meaning of this? The manor, it is Thor's. I know we've both had our qualms about Thor being the sole inheritor but..."

"No, darling brother, I am the sole inheritor," Hela chuckled softly. "We spoke, yes, and I learned everything I could about Thor and his closeness to his father. It became clear I needed a man on the inside just to make sure the second will was never completed, that there would always be some little thing in the way, one more thing to be done before it could be signed."

Hela smiled and squeezed Munninn's arm, and the servant winced lightly.

"Don't worry, you have no reason to fear," she purred to the beta. "Your task is complete, your daughter will be returned home by the end of the day. Anyway, I know Loki explained my story to you, but I'm sure you're still a bit confused, Thor. You are just thick headed like that. I am your elder sister from Odin's first wife. I know he erased all traces of her, but she was a proud woman and she was my mother. I was his shining, only child until you were born. You were a bouncing baby boy, and I could just tell you'd be an alpha, so I needed a plan."

“A plan?” Loki glared. “You said Odin killed my mother.”

“Darling,” Hela chuckled softly, shaking her head. “Yes, he killed your mother, but I was trying to kill Odin’s bitch as well. He taught me far too well. He was using arsenic to slowly poison your mother, but at the same time I was trying to poison Frigga with arsenic so that her milk would kill her new baby, two birds with one stone. Sadly, it seemed both she and Thor were too strong and when Odin discovered what I was doing he sent me away.”

“That’s our mother you speak of!” Thor cried. “You will not speak of her as such!”

“You tried to kill Frigga? You lied to me!” Loki cried, his breath picking up. “So many times over!”

“Yes, dearest,” Hela sighed. “But don’t worry, no one will believe you if you try to tell on me. Anyway, I knew that Odin murdered your mother, so he could not report me for trying to murder his new wife. I swore I would not tell the authorities if he swore to leave me as his sole inheritor. He agreed and sent me away, but then he tried to break our deal and I had to intervene. That is when I took Muninn’s and Huginn’s children to make sure our deal would be upheld. Now then, I’ve explained my story to you, do you have any questions?”

“Yes!” Thor stood before Loki was able to stop him. “I have many questions! Do you mean to tell me you plan to take the house and the money and everything father owned?”

“Yes, Thor, that is how inheritance works,” Hela sighed and rolled her eyes. “Everything that Odin owned is now mine. Any more intelligent questions? Not that I have very high expectations for you boys...”

“Hela, I trusted you,” Loki spat softly, leaning forward, his eyes practically shooting sparks. “I trust no one, but I trusted you. You’re our sister. I already know family means nothing, but you convinced me it might mean something! You spoke of family as if it might matter, as if you might care that I am your brother!”

“Silly boy, you should know better than to trust someone from this family. Odin taught me many things, really, and lying was one of his best characteristics. I had heard it was one of yours, but it seems I was mistaken. True you lied that you cared for En Dwi, when truly I know you’re just a slut who will take anything any alpha will give you, but it seems that was your peak of intelligence. Anyway, it doesn’t matter. Ah! Huginn, there you are. Did you find the papers.”

“Yes ma’am,” the beta murmured, flushing and bowing as Thor and Loki both glared hatefully.

“What papers?” Loki spat, his hands clenched in a fist. “What more could you possibly hope to take from us, sister?”

“Sister?” Hela chuckled. “No, my title is now Lady Hela. I do not wish to take his name, so I shall take my own. Hm, yes, these are the papers. Good work, your son will be released as well.”

“What papers?” Thor growled, yet ice suddenly started churning on Loki’s stomach, and he turned white as a sheet.

“No,” Loki’s voice was just above a whisper, but he shot up moments later, leaping to grab for the papers before Hela pulled them out of his reach. She hummed as she examined them, before breaking into a grin even as Loki spat, “Hand them over! Now!”

“I think not,” Hela chuckled softly, her gaze shifting to Peter who had been silent up until now. He blinked when the attention shifted to him, and he froze when Hela murmured, “Come, greet your

new master.”

“You witch! You keep your hands off him!” Loki cried as Peter blinked in confusion and made a face.

“What are you talking about? I’m free!” Peter cried indignantly. “I’ve been free for two years now! More than two years!”

“Loki melted your collar and acted like you were a free little omega, but it was only an act,” Hela chuckled darkly. “He knew these papers were stashed in his room below the floorboards. No one ever found them, I made sure of that. Oh yes that servant Shuri looked for them, but she never found them, and ever since Thor cut her hours it was easily for Muninn to keep her too busy to search! Of course Loki acted like you’re his omega, but it’s silly to imagine that Odin would ever allow his youngest, omega son to own another omega for himself. And so, of course, you were owned under the Odin family name, which I’ve inherited. Thus, little one, I’ve inherited you.”

“No... no, you can’t do this!” Loki cried, suddenly becoming uncharacteristically emotional. He leaped to his feet and was only stopped from leaping at Hela by Muninn who glared at Loki and pushed him back. Tony, who was still standing outside, finally burst into the room just as Huginn grabbed Peter, who struggled in his grip and demanded to be let go.

“What are you doing?” Tony demanded. “What is going on? I will not sit out there any longer!”

“Oh, that’s alright, you’re just in time;” Hela leered. “I was just having this omega transferred into my possession, though the omega was being most bothersome...”

“Your possession!” Tony cried as Peter stomped on Huginn’s foot, yelping when he was hit upside the head by Muninn. Tony stormed forward, but he paused when the papers were held in front of his eyes before being snatched away.

“As you can see,” Hela pointed to the documents. “They’re completely legally binding. Perhaps if Loki had destroyed them, or followed through with someone else, this would not be happening. As it is, I have found myself with a delicious new treat.”

“You mean you could have prevented this?” Tony hissed at Loki. “She’s not wrong, it’s legal but... how could you let this happen?”

“Me?” Loki spat. “I was sent from this home! There was nothing more I could have done! I understand if Shuri was kept busy with work and did not have a chance, but you were in charge of the manor, Thor! What kept you from looking!”

“I...” Thor appeared frozen, and for a moment he looked very pale. Hela raised her eyebrows, both curious and amused as Thor whispered, “I never wanted to leave father.”

“And travel up one flight of stairs to the attic? What, you couldn’t stoop so low as to search the room of your banished omega half brother? Oh no, it makes perfect sense,” Loki snapped. He looked up quickly when there was a soft snick, and he winced when Peter yelped softly, hands flying up to pull at the collar Hela had snapped around his neck.

“You three are so predictable and petty,” Hela chuckled softly. “Squabbling amongst yourselves over something that none of you could have prevented. I liked this little omega the moment I set my eyes on him, and I always get my way.”

Peter hissed when Hela pulled at the leash attached to the collar, wincing as her hand brushed back his curls tenderly.

“You let me go,” Peter demanded softly. “I am free, I don’t belong to you or anyone else. I am no one’s omega.”

“But darling, you are perfectly, legally mine,” Hela chuckled softly, stroking his hair again. “Don’t worry, you’ll quickly come to remember your place. Now, you three will get out of my house before you are thrown out.”

“No way,” Tony spat. “I am not leaving while you have Peter. He comes with us.”

“You will have to throw us pretty hard, for we will just keep coming back,” Loki agreed hatefully. “You may have been lying, using me, the same as Odin did, but I will not have another person I love ripped from me. You will not have Peter.”

“I will have whatever I want,” Hela growled. She saw Peter moving to leap away, and she grabbed some small, metal object which she shoved against his belly. Peter cried out, and moments later he crumpled, whimpering softly. Hela simply smirked. “Electricity, it truly is the most wonderful invention. Now, get out.”

“We... We will not,” Thor suddenly spat, swallowing hard and wiping at his cheeks. “I am Odin’s alpha son, and I will not allow you to squander everything he held dear. I will find a way to inherit. I will find a way to ruin you. You won’t harm another hair on Peter’s head, and you won’t harm another thing in this house.”

“I don’t truly care about this house, or anything in it,” Hela smiled. “Money and land is all I care for. In fact, I don’t care about these gardens, I’m going to have them replaced with large crop fields. They will be cleared of the ridiculous grandeur and replaced with something useful. In fact, why not start now? Gunginn, go out to the front garden and begin pulling out the roses. Go on, hurry up.”

“No, no you can’t do this! That was mother’s! That was mother’s pride and joy!” Thor cried, leaping to his feet. He winced when Hela smirked and pressed the small metal object to Peter again, who began to tremble. Hela chuckled and murmured, “Your mother, not mine. Go stand by the window, brother, and say goodbye.”

Thor was nearly trembling with anger, but he rushed to the window and Loki winced when he let out a soft cry, hitting his fist against the window hard enough to put a small crack in the glass.

“Hela, reconsider,” Loki tried to reason when he saw no option left. “We could make more money working together. Hand over Peter and then we can talk.”

“I don’t want to talk, you stupid boy,” Hela glared. “My mind is made.”

“I will find a way to ruin you,” Thor turned back, pushing back a snuffle, his eyes red with anger. “I will. You will let the boy go, and you will stop this. You will not ruin another thing my parents loved. You will stop this! I will find a way, I-“

Thor cried out when Muninn suddenly pushed something against the back of Thor’s neck, and he collapsed to the ground, out cold.

“Somehow, I don’t think he’ll get the chance,” Hela chuckled darkly. “Now, Stark and Loki, you’re both supposed to be smart boys. Leave and I will not harm this omega again.”

“What, without Thor?” Tony glared.

“Yes,” Hela nodded once. “Don’t worry, he’s going to go on a cruise! I always heard he loves

ships, why not sale for Canada? I hear they're having a gold rush, and I got Thor a one way ticket."

"You can't do this," Tony spat.

"Darling, I've found I can do anything I put my mind to," Hela smiled. "You don't want to leave? That's alright, I understand. It is certainly a lot to take in. You know, I am sorry, brother. Actually, that's a lie. I couldn't care less."

Loki opened his mouth to say something else, but Hela pulled out a small dart gun and shot it at him. Tony cried out as Loki stumbled and Tony caught him before he could hit the ground, eyes fluttering closed.

"Don't worry, it's just a sedative like they use on safaris in Africa," Hela smiled. "You'll wake up by morning."

Tony began to storm forward, but a dart hit him as well, and Tony sunk to the floor.

It was the soft sound of seagulls that woke him up, and the waving of the ground beneath his feet that made his eyes shoot open. He was about to stumble to his feet when he felt a hand on the pulse point of his neck and he scampered backwards until he hit a wall.

"Whoa whoa, hey, sit, stay," a gruff voice hit his eyes, and Thor growled, rubbing his eyes as trying to get used to the low light of the room he was in. It took several moments, but finally his eyes adjusted and then he spotted an odd little man sitting on a box in front of him, casually holding a pistol, and Thor froze.

"Who are you?" He demanded. "Where am I? What is the meaning of this? Where is my brother? I demand to see Hela!"

"Demand? Look, I don't think you quite understand what's going on, mate. You've been Shanghaied. Yeah, this rich broad handed you over and now you're part of the crew. Hey, hold on I'll get the captain," the beta declared, hopping off the crate and then hurrying up the stairs. Thor realized belatedly that he was in a cell of some kind, and he let out an indignant cry, hitting the bars. To his surprise, they easily fell away and he scrambled to his feet and ran up the stairs only to hit a large, muscular alpha man at the top who glared at him.

"Where do you think you are running?" The man demanded, grabbing him and twisting his arm easily behind his back. "You wait for the captain with me!"

Thor opened his mouth to say something else, but a beta in full pirates gear stepped onto the deck, the wind gently ruffling his long red coat. For a moment, he almost looked noble, but the appearance fell away when he groaned and pointed to Thor, demanding, "Hey, how'd he get out? Did the cell fail again? Man, Drax I told you to fix that!"

"I did fix it," the man holding Thor explained simply. "And now it failed again."

"Okay well... next time Rocket is fixing it because at least he'll do a half good job. You did a... full bad job!"

"I did an excellent job," Drax replied. "I will fix it again."

"Yeah, and then it will fail again!" The man dressed like a pirate rolled his eyes. "Well, are you going to run away? Look, he's shaking his head. Anyway, this is a ship. If he runs, he falls off, he

drowns, no more problem. So let him go? Yeah, there we go. Okay, sorry about that. Welcome. What's your name?"

"Thor," Thor growled softly. "Who are you, and what is this place?"

"This place," the pirate stepped forward and stood a little taller, crossing his arms and deepening his voice. "Is my ship. And I am the Captain Quill, the most feared pirate on the seven seas."

"Peter, get over here, now! The mainsail is stuck again," a voice called, and Quill flushed, turning to the mast where a beautiful female omega in black leather pants was fiddling with the sail.

"Gamora," Quill hissed. "Can't you see I'm trying to threaten the prisoner?"

"Threaten him?" She huffed. "I thought you were asking him to tea. Look, Thor, here's the deal. We got paid a handsome price to take you to Canada. If you don't like it, you can jump ship and drown because we're already hundreds of miles from England at this point. Otherwise, I recommend you help us out. Come here, grab this bit of the sail, and help me pull."

"Canada?" Thor cried. "I can't go to Canada! Listen, I am Lord Odinson and I demand to be taken home. My father just died and my Manor was stolen from my brother and I! This lady who is evidently my sister has kidnapped my brother's omega! We have to go back!"

"I'm so sorry..."

Thor yelped softly as a hand landed on his arm, and he looked down to see an omega with long black hair standing by his side.

"Mantis..." Gamora sighed, rolling her eyes as the omega pulled Thor into a hug. Gamora glared at Quill and muttered, "Of course. Of course this would happen."

"You are hurting," Mantis murmured. "I know that. It is so hard to lose someone who you love..."

"Yes," Thor murmured, relaxing into the hug. "Yes it... it is."

"I am Groot!"

Thor yelped softly again as a child no older than three came toddling onto the deck, and Rocket sighed and rolled his eyes.

"What are you doing up here?" He demanded. "This is not the time... Sorry, Quill, I put him to bed but he just keeps waking up."

"Is he... is he your child?" Thor blinked at Rocket.

"Nah, we found him sleeping in some fishing nets so we took him in," Rocket shrugged.

"Hopefully he didn't have a family, but I'm assuming if he did then they were awful. He was sleeping in a fishing net, after all, and he only knows three words. Come on now, back to bed..."

Thor blinked as the small man led the child back towards a door into the ship, and he felt like he was having an odd fever dream for a moment before he pulled himself together and turned back to face the captain.

"I demand to be taken home!" Thor's voice suddenly turned into a shout, and he stormed towards Quill, who swallowed and took a small step back, crossing his arms again.

"Sorry, no can do," Quill replied. "We're going to Canada."

“We are going back to England!” Thor shouted, reaching forward to grab Quill’s coat and shake him, to which everyone else on the ship took a quick step forward. Thor was like an angry bull, though, and he slammed Quill against the mast, shaking him again. “My father has already been taken from me, and I will not have any more ripped away! I must go back and assist my brother! You will take me home, now! Captain? You are not even an alpha!”

“Shut up, man, I know,” Quill glared, trying not to tremble in Thor’s hands. “Look, we were paid a lot of money to take you to Canada.”

“There are many things more important than money,” Thor glared. “And anyway, would she be able to take back the money she already gave you? No, because I would stop her! We are returning to England.”

“Well... true, we already have the money,” Quill hummed.

“I do not like Canada, it is too cold,” Drax hummed.

“Look,” Gamora stepped forward. “Your plight is noble and all, but we’ll have to talk about it. Let our Captain go, and we’ll decide.”

“But-“

“Now,” Gamora pulled a sword, the tip pressing to Thor’s neck in moments, and he quickly released Quill, backing up with his hands raised.

“Good,” Gamora nodded once. “Now, go back to your cell and wait. Someone will tell you our decision.”

“But-“

“Go wait,” Gamora growled, and Thor swallowed, crossed his arms, and then slunk away towards the brig. Once he was gone, the crew eyed each other.

“Does anyone not want to return to England?” Quill asked.

“Canada is too cold,” Drax repeated.

“England has better bars,” Gamora pointed out.

“We should help the kind man,” Mantis nodded.

“Kind man? Did you not just see him slam me into my own ship?” Quill muttered.

“You kidnapped him,” Mantis pointed out, and Quill huffed.

“Yes, well there is that,” Quill muttered. He hesitated for only a moment more, gazed out at the ocean, and then finally declared, “Alright, fine, looks like we’re heading back to England.”

Chapter End Notes

Thanks to Lokislonleyleady for sticking with me and this story :) You might notice I added how many chapters I predict there will be total. That is subject to change, but I

expect there to be that amount. Anyway, I hope you enjoyed! There will be a bit more drama before the big climax and conclusion. Don't worry, all the elements will be tied together... you'll see ;)

I hope you enjoyed and I look forward to any comments you may have about this story!

Living Dead

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Everyday I feel the same

Stuck and I could never change

Sucked into a black balloon

Spat into an empty room

Was it really worth it? Did I really deserve it?

It happens when you're hurting

And cut me at the surface of my heart

Ever since he'd been a boy, wandering the fish market by the docks with his mother and brother, Thor had adored the sea. There was something about the salty air, the rocking of the decks, the sounds of rigging and bells in the wind that pulled Thor towards a life he thought he'd never experience. When he'd been caring for his sick father, Thor had dreamed about the ocean. He'd thought about the docks, and the sailors, and the way life might be if things were different. There was a picture in the hall of a ship being tossed about in the open sea, and when he squinted Thor used to be certain he could see it rocking in the waves. His father had loved when Thor read to him, so Thor read stories about sailors, and pirates, about adventures he knew he'd never have.

Thor had dreamed of such a life, but he'd come to accept it would never be his. It was clear to him where his duty lay. Thor was the lord of the manor, and his father's alpha son. It was his duty to be a good son, to care for his father, to put his fantasies aside and live up to the expectations placed upon him. And yet now his father was dead, and a sister he'd never known sat in his place while his estranged brother was likely pained as his omega lover had been stolen away for a nightmarish life.

Dear Shuri , Thor wrote one evening, the charcoal staining his fingers as much as the scrap of linen Thor had found stashed with the sails. *I know what my duty is, but this life calls to me as nothing has before. I know you'll never get this letter, but I want to talk to someone, and I imagine you'd give me good advice. You always were a wonderful listener, even when I pushed you away as my father's health worsened. I thought I knew what I needed and wanted from life. I came to understand that I had to be Lord Odinson. I thought I needed nothing more, yet now my heart is aching more than it ever had before. This ship, this life, it makes something inside of me stir. The crew laughs and jokes. They have so little, and yet they have no cares. They claim to value money and wealth, yet they have something far greater than treasure. There is a kinship here of which I've never known. They truly rely upon one another to survive. I want to be happy here, Shuri, and yet I don't know what to do or what to think any longer. You know Hela took everything from me, but then perhaps I didn't have so much to give up as one might think. She was banished by father, you know. She told me her story. She took everything from me, but then perhaps I took everything from her simply by being born. You know, on nights like these I sometimes wonder if father ever even loved me, or if he simply needed an alpha heir. Perhaps this is what I deserve for being born and taking Hela's life. What says that I should be Lord Odinson any more than her? I have not earned such a title, and perhaps I am not worthy of it. I was born into it, and now just as easily I allowed it*

to be taken away. I did not work for it, instead I sat useless by my father's side until he died. The manor fell into disrepair under my care. I did nothing to help the world. I only sat useless by his side, and drank when he was asleep. I did not find a bride to carry on the line, I did not work as I should have. I just missed mother, and missed how father used to be, and I missed my brother while doing nothing to bring him home. No, perhaps I am not worthy after all. I wish I could enjoy this life on the sea, but then perhaps that is wrong too. I don't know Shuri, and this ache inside me never goes away. I hope you fare better than I.

"Mate? You okay? You've been kind of quiet tonight."

Thor looked up as Quill poked his head into the room, and Thor quickly stuffed the linen into his pocket, forcing a grin as he turned.

"I have simply been thinking," Thor replied easily, standing up. "How are you and the crew this evening?"

"Oh, same as always, but we need another member for our card game. You want to join? We're playing for a bottle of rum," Quill grinned. Thor chuckled softly, marching over to clap a hand against Quill's back.

"It sounds like a good time," Thor smiled. "You are kind for allowing me to join."

"Hey, we just need an extra player since Mantis is sitting out this time," Quill defended, though there was a kind sparkle in his eye and he clasped Thor's arm. Once they came outside, the other beamed at Thor, happily handing over his cards. Groot was seated on Mantis' lap, happily examining the Ace of Hearts. He smiled and clapped when Thor sat beside him, and he reached over to bop Thor on the nose before Mantis hushed the child. Thor simply laughed softly, though, reaching to ruffle Groot's hair.

They played long into the evening, but it was unsurprising when Gamora won. Once the game ended, the crew sat around the deck, each engaged in their own activities. Rocket had an affinity for wood carving with his sharp knives, and he was currently making some sort of toy for Groot who watched in fascination. Meanwhile Drax entertained himself by tying and untying all manner of incredible knots in the ship's ropes.

Gamora was leaning against Quill's chest, sipping her rum as he played a tune on his harmonica. Thor was leaning against the mast when Mantis came to sit by him, placing a hand on his knee.

"The ocean is beautiful at night, isn't it?" She murmured. "I grew up on an island, and every night my father used to tell me a story about one of the stars. See that one, there? That was my star."

"Your star is ugly," Drax grunted. "It is different than all the others. But then it also shines very bright, like you."

"That isn't a star," Thor laughed softly. "That's the moon."

"Oh, the moon is ugly," Drax replied.

"No it isn't," Mantis replied softly. "I think it's beautiful. I love the way it reflects upon the ocean. When your ship came to my island, I first saw it as a reflection in the water, and it made waves flow under the light it makes. I thought I was happy there, but I wasn't. My father and I were the only ones on the island, you see. He hid me from the world so that I had no life beyond what he gave me. But there is much more to this world, and I have seen it now."

"What happened to your father?" Thor murmured.

“He died,” Mantis sighed softly. “He wouldn’t let me leave, and he tried to shoot Peter with his musket. It was Peter’s life or his own. I was sad when he died, but I also knew that he did not treat me right.”

“I’m sorry,” Thor murmured.

“Everyone has a sob story if you go back far enough,” Gamora spoke up as Quill set his harmonica aside. “We all know you do, even if we don’t quite know what it is. The true question, though, is what you do with your life next. Do you let that story control you, or do you control your life?”

“I am in control of my destiny,” Thor replied stiffly. “I am an alpha.”

“Being an alpha has nothing to do with it,” Quill chuckled. “You’ll see. Anyway, enough of this. How about some real music? Huh? Anyone else want to?”

“Alright,” Mantis chuckled, reaching to grab her wooden flute sitting nearby. Rocket grinned and stood up, grabbing a fiddle while Drax smiled and marched away, coming back with an accordion. Thor smiled as the group broke into music, and Groot giggled and clapped along. Gamora simply smiled, moving to sit beside Thor as the group laughed and played their music.

“They all come from nothing,” Gamora murmured. “And yet look how happy they are. You have noble blood, and a chance in life, but more than that you have a choice. Many people don’t have a choice, but you do. Don’t waste that privilege by giving up on yourself or the world. I see something good in you, Thor. Maybe you want to go back and be a noble, or maybe you don’t. Either way, choose what you believe right, and know that you will be welcome here if you want to be.”

Gamora let out a sound of surprise as Quill suddenly grabbed her arm and pulled her up to dance, and she couldn’t help the soft chuckle that bubbled from her lips, while Thor swallowed a lump in his throat and looked on.

Got bubble wrap around my heart

Waiting for my life to start

But everyday it never comes

Permanently at square one

When it's late at night

I'm so dissatisfied

The weight of an empty life

Will lessen in the moonlight

“Loki? Is it alright if I come sit with you?”

Loki didn’t bother to look over when he heard Bucky’s voice. Instead he simply sighed and pulled his knees to his chest.

“Did Tony send you?” Loki hummed absently. “I don’t want to come inside.”

“I didn’t ask you to come inside, I asked to sit with you. He misses you though, you know. It’s been two days and you’ve hardly acknowledged him or anyone else. He’s doing everything he can to

figure out where Thor is and how to get Peter back. He's working very hard."

"What does it matter?" Loki muttered. "This isn't his fault, it's mine. You know for once I thought I was doing the right thing? I thought I was doing something good. I guess I should've known better, should've known that I could not be capable of good things. I should've known that the moment I ruined Odin, the man who raised me as a father. You probably don't understand what I'm talking about."

"You know," Bucky chuckled, sitting beside Loki. "You might be surprised. Omegas like us aren't always very popular with society. You've always pointed out how different we are, and you're right, but we're also quite similar. True, you had wealth and title, and I was a penniless kid from Brooklyn who got kidnapped, and for those reasons we both became outcasts. The world doesn't trust me anymore than it seems to trust you, but that doesn't mean we can't do good. You were doing something good before, and what has happened to Peter isn't your fault. Your sister tricked you, but that doesn't mean she has to win. Steve is helping Tony, and I'll help you. We are going to find a way to bring Peter home."

Loki sighed softly, gazing at Bucky for a moment longer before he looked up at the night sky. The two omegas sat in silence for a long moment before Loki spoke.

"You know, it's amazing that the moon shines over all the world. In many ways it connects us. Do you think he's watching the moon too?"

"Who?" Bucky murmured softly.

"Peter, Thor, either of them and both of them," Loki murmured. "Hela convinced me to hate my brother. She told me that if he truly cared for me, he would have come for me, but I saw him when Odin died. He isn't the alpha I once knew. There is something broken inside of him, and suddenly I don't hate him anymore. Somehow I cannot blame him for leaving me. He loved Odin as a son should love a father, I suppose. While Frigga was the best parent I could have wished for, Odin did care for Thor. They did things together. Odin played with Thor as a child, they'd go on rides together, they played games and learned things... Thor loved father, and I took Odin from him."

"You didn't," Bucky murmured. "It was his time. It isn't your fault."

"But it is, don't you see?" Loki turned to face Bucky, unshed tears clinging to his lashes. "If I hadn't..."

"Lived?" Bucky interrupted.

"What?" Loki sniffled.

"You were living your life as one should," Bucky replied. "You loved Peter, you were following your heart, and you were living. Your father couldn't tolerate the idea that you might be happy in a way that did not fit with his world's standards. That doesn't make you bad, or guilty. You were brave for acting as you did, Loki. Anyway, all of that is in the past. It's time for a future that is new and different. We have to form a plan to save Peter, and we have to keep working towards a better world."

"I want to work for a better world, but a part of me wonders if I will only make things worse," Loki sighed softly. "We helped people, Bucky, but at what cost and... And anyway, maybe I'm done with all that. I want Peter back, safe, and then maybe it's time I move on. I enjoyed my time as a spy working for you and Steve. It was good to help others, but perhaps I'm simply not the right person."

“You are the right person, Loki,” Bucky murmured. “You deserve happiness. You deserve your life with Tony, with Peter. You deserve happiness and love. But Loki, you were also very good at what you did, and the world needs people like you and me. They think they can’t trust us, but really we’re the only ones who can do the jobs everyone else isn’t clever enough to carry out. Someone needs to be doing this job. For now you can step down, but if something were to happen to me, would you take my place?”

“Take your place?” Loki blinked. “What do you mean?”

“If something were to happen to me, there is no one I would rather have working behind the scenes to save help omegas and rid this world of the evil growing everywhere we look. Hydra is here, and if we don’t stop it then who will? Loki, will you? If something were to happen to me, would you step up?”

“Nothing is going to happen to you Bucky,” Loki sighed. “Steve wouldn’t let anything happen to you.”

“I will do everything in my power to get Peter home safely, even put myself in danger,” Bucky murmured. “And something could happen to me. Would you take my place? Please?”

“Bucky-“

“Please?”

“I...” Loki hesitated, swallowed hard. He bit his lip, and his eyes turned up to gaze at the moon. For a long moment he was silent, and the only sound was that of a soft wind that pushed at the leaves. Finally, though, Loki looked back to Bucky, and he nodded. “I will. I promise.”

“Thank you,” Bucky murmured. “I was once so hurt, so trapped, and I swore that I would save as many omegas as I could. I can’t stand the thought that just because I was gone meant that those omegas would now have no one to help them.”

“I know what it’s like to feel trapped,” Loki replied softly. “But for now I... I will do anything and everything to help Peter come home, but then I need a rest from all this. Tony says he loves me, and even if I feel as though love hardly seems real anymore, maybe I can try to... to experience love. I love Peter already, but he has more than once given me permission to have Tony as well. I want to have a normal life, if even for a moment. I want peace, if even for a second.”

“I understand,” Bucky promised. “Now why don’t we go in? It’s getting cold out here.”

“Alright,” Loki agreed softly, looking up at the moon for a moment more. “I hope they’re alright, both of them.”

“They will be,” Bucky replied. “We’ll make sure of it.”

One thing Thor learned about the sea is that it was incredibly unpredictable. There was a pattering of rain outside today and a wind that was blowing them off course. Thankfully Rocket said that it wouldn’t be a big storm, and they’d be safe, but it was an inconvenience. The boat was rocking more than usual, but Groot seemed to find it fun as he was simply dancing around on the floor as Quill played his harmonica to keep the child entertained.

Thor shook himself off by the door as he'd just come in from helping Drax take down the sails. Gamora was currently steering the ship, but when Mantis followed Thor inside, Quill tipped his three cornered hat and stood up, setting the harmonica aside.

"I'm going up top," he declared. "To help steer the ship. Mantis, can you take care of him for now?"

"Of course," she smiled, beckoning Groot over.

"I wish to come," Thor declared, to which Quill hesitated before nodding.

"Yeah, okay, if you don't mind some more rain, your lordiness," Quill shrugged.

"I do not mind some rain," Thor chuckled softly. "In fact I always sort of like the rain. It's refreshing."

"Whatever, suit yourself," Quill shrugged. Thor followed him onto the deck where Drax and Rocket were hurrying about, preparing the ship further for the rain.

"Hello," Quill declared as he marched up the steps to stand beside Gamora who seemed to be having absolutely no trouble steering the ship. Even so, Quill reached for the wheel.

"What do you think you're doing?" Gamora asked skeptically. "Stand back so I have room."

"I can help," Quill argued, but Gamora simply laughed.

"In this weather? Please, leave it to me. I piloted my father's boats through many storms far worse than this one. I trust myself at the helm, I know I'll keep us safe," Gamora replied.

"Your father?" Thor asked. "He was a sailor?"

"He was a pirate," Gamora replied, looking at Quill and then adding, "A real pirate. I was raised at sea on his ship. He taught me all there was to know about the ocean and her secrets. He taught me how to be a true pirate, and that is why I am now here, because I reject that life. That's all I'm going to say about that. Now, if you don't mind I am busy and I can do my job much better without you two hovering around. Go back inside before you catch cold."

"But--"

"Now, Peter," Gamora snapped. "Go on. You know you just got over a fever last week. Back inside, and take the noble with you."

"Come on," Quill muttered. "Let's go."

Thor followed Quill down the steps, yet before they could go inside, Thor murmured, "Her father was a pirate?"

Quill hesitated, glancing up at Gamora, before he pulled Thor into his own cabin rather than the communal one.

"A pirate captain," Quill nodded once the door was shut. "But don't talk about him, it's bad luck. Anyway, Gamora will have your head if she hears you mention him. His name was Thanos, and he... He was what one could call a true pirate I guess. Or a true bloodthirsty killer. Take your pick."

"I've heard that name," Thor frowned. "Though I'm not sure why. I think I heard it at a pub near

the docks...”

“Wouldn’t be surprised,” Quill hummed. “He’s famous, especially around sea folk. See, he doesn’t care about money, not really. He seems to kill for the fame. They say he used to raid ships, but rather than sink the ship he would have his men kill half the crew, and only half. That way the other half could go on to tell the story of how ruthless he was. They say that after you encounter Thanos, a curse is on your ship, that your crew will never be the same.”

Both men winced when lightening suddenly flashed outside, and Quill sighed deeply.

“Just great,” Quill sighed. “At least the waves aren’t too bad.”

“What happened to Thanos?” Thor asked softly. “Is he still a pirate?”

“He disappeared,” Quill sighed. “Some people think his ship sank, but no one knows for certain. Anyway, he hasn’t been seen nor heard from in years. Come on, let’s get back to the others, your lordiness.”

“Hey,” Thor reached out to catch Quill’s arm. “I am your shipmate now, am I not? Please, just call me Thor?”

“But... you’re a noble and all that,” Quill scoffed.

“No,” Thor shook his head, pressing his eyes shut for a moment. “Please, I’m not. Not anymore. Just Thor.”

“I... Alright,” Quill grinned slowly. “Alright, mate. Come on, they’ll be missing us.”

Chapter End Notes

Thanks again to lokislonleyleady for sticking with this story for so long and still editing it!

Also thanks for your comments, and I hope you’re enjoying! This chapter was actually sort of fun to write, especially with the Guardians, who were shockingly easy to throw in. What do you think of them, and what do you think of Bucky and Loki’s interaction?

Believe in Love

Chapter Notes

So no Peter this chapter but don't worry, you'll find out what's up with him the chapter after this :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

You say that I'm different to the girls you dated

You say that you found me, I'm the one you waited for

Guess I need to trust you when you say you love me

Every day you say that you've been thinking of me, on (On and on)

And my mood, it changes all the time, I smile with tears in my eyes

But I can't be acting like this, doubting you for the rest of my life

“Loki! Good morning, coffee? No you like tea better. One sugar? Bit of cream? Here you go... Did you sleep alright?”

Loki yawned, rubbing at his eyes as he slipped into the kitchen chair across from Bucky and began stirring the teacup handed to him. Steve was reading the newspaper, and he peered over the top as Tony hovered around Loki, rubbing the back of his neck as he poked at some bacon on the stove. He swore softly when Dr Banner pointed out that it was burning, and Tony quickly put it on a plate filled with already burned toast and some greasy looking eggs.

“Surprise!” Tony forced a smile. “I made you breakfast.”

“Hm,” Loki poked at it hesitantly, wincing at the way the eggs jiggled. “What happened to Jarvis?”

“Oh, he’s around somewhere. Scarlet was free this morning so I told him he could go spend time with her. Anyway I wanted to cook for you! What do you think?” Tony’s smile wavered.

“Uh,” Loki swallowed down a nibble of the bacon. “I think it’s interesting that you decided to take up cooking. It might help you to remember that a well oiled machine is a good machine, the same cannot be said for food... But it’s thoughtful. I am still not sure why you did this, though. I thought the captain was your resident cook.”

“Well Steve made my breakfast,” Bucky stated, making a slight face at Loki, and understanding came onto his face.

“I see,” Loki chuckled softly, turning to Tony, who flushed. “They say the way to the heart is through the stomach, yes? Well, I think tea is the way to my heart. Your tea is delicious. Steve, is there any of your breakfast left?”

“Nope,” Steve hummed over his newspaper. “Sorry.”

Loki frowned and turned back to his plate, nibbling at it and wrinkling his nose as Tony pulled up a chair.

“So,” Tony went on quickly, flushing slightly. “We were talking about Peter before you came down.”

“Yes?” Loki looked up sharply.

“We don’t really have a plan right now,” Tony admitted with a soft sigh. “However we were in contact with Shuri and she thinks she can get Bucky in to see Peter. See, Hela leaves sometimes during the day and Shuri is still working there. Peter is, uh, locked up essentially but Shuri thinks she’d be able to smuggle Bucky in and out while Hela is gone.”

“Why Bucky?” Loki blinked.

“Let’s just say I’m good at stealth,” Bucky replied. “I’ll be able to do it.”

“It’s better than nothing,” Loki nodded. “At least he won’t be so alone while we figure out how to get him free. Any news of Thor?”

“Not much,” Steve admitted. “But Sam came back from the docks of London and said there was absolutely no local talk of anyone matching Thor’s description. If he was sent out on a ship, it seems unlikely that the ship left from London. However, Sam is planning to go out again today and I think I might join him. We’re going to try Southampton.”

“Remember, a lot of the omegas were coming in at the Southampton docks,” Bucky pointed out. “If there are ships there willing to engage in the omega kidnappings, it’s possible that Hela could engage with similar people to get Thor out of the country.”

“Thank you,” Loki murmured. “You’ve both done so much for me...”

“Hey,” Bucky smiled, leaning across the table to squeeze Loki’s arm. “We take care of our friends.”

“Til the end of the line,” Steve agreed, squeezing Bucky’s shoulder. The omega smiled up at him, moving to take Steve’s hand in his own and kiss the inside of his wrist.

“I wish we could do more,” Loki murmured. “I can’t stand this. I finally get Peter back, only to lose him to this... I just hope he’s alright.”

“Have you heard anything from Gast?” Bucky murmured. “Does he know anything?”

“No,” Loki admitted. “I left quickly and I haven’t contacted him since. He’ll likely think I’m just handling my family affairs and that I plan to return.”

“Do you?”

“I...” Loki looked to Tony before sighing. “I need Peter safe before I can do anything else. And anyway I... I’m not certain I can, now. Bucky, I want to help you and Steve, but perhaps there is another way. It’s not that I minded what I was doing, it’s just...”

“Loki, what you took on was not so much of a job as a lifestyle, but you need a real life,” Bruce murmured. “A life outside of that. I completely understand feeling overwhelmed.”

“There’s not much you can do right now, though,” Steve murmured. “Let Bucky take care of Peter,

at least until we come up with something better, and let me and Sam look for Thor. You just recover, alright? You need a chance to.”

“Thank you,” Loki clutched at his tea. “Though I’m fine. I suppose I don’t have much I can even do. I was with Gast for a long that I suppose I...”

“Forgot how to live?” Bucky smiled sadly. Loki nodded, but Tony reached over to squeeze his arm.

“Don’t worry,” Tony murmured. “I think you’ll find that I’m very good at living.”

“I’ve never doubted that,” Loki chuckled softly in reply.

After breakfast, Loki helped Tony wash the dishes and then the two of them wandered out onto the veranda. Loki’s fingers traced over the shining, white wood and he smiled as memories flooded him. He couldn’t help but startle, though, when Tony’s fingers found his own.

“Sorry,” Tony pulled back.

“No, it’s alright,” Loki reached over to slip his fingers into the spaces between Tony’s. “Don’t apologize, love.”

“I am sorry, though,” Tony insisted. “I know you’ve been through a lot. I should ask before I do anything.”

“It’s not that,” Loki’s smile was sad. “The Grandmaster did all manner of things with me, and I never truly minded.”

“And yet you always seem to flinch when our hands meet,” Tony sighed softly. “You’ve been like this with me for years now. It’s alright, I never want to push you, but I’m not sure I understand. When we were young you used to cuddle with me, and we were happy. I thought for a long time that you liked omegas, and so you did not wish to touch me like that, but if you also like alphas then... then why? I just want to understand.”

“Tony, I’ve wanted to love you since I was young,” Loki admitted, turning to the alpha. He reached a hand up to brush back a bit of Tony’s hair, chuckling softly when the alpha blinked in surprise. “And yet I thought you did not truly love me. You explained to me why you acted as you did, and that’s alright, but deep in my heart I can’t help but doubt. You had so many omegas, Tony, and you used to flaunt them like they were your treasures. At the parties my family hosted you’d walk in with as many as three omegas by your side, and you’d dance with them and even kiss them in public when the night grew dark. It hurt to see you with them, even after we were engaged.

“You said you’d marry me, and yet you still went around with other omegas as if you engagement meant nothing to you. And the world never minded! My parents simply said it was alright because you’re an alpha, and alphas can do those things. And so I tried to show you how it hurt me by giving myself to other alphas at night, and yet that made me a slut and everyone seemed to hate me all the more. And you never saw, you never understood. So now you tell me none of them mattered, that you loved me all along, but how can I believe that you didn’t tell them all the same thing? How can I believe that you won’t leave me for another omega when I become boring to you, like last year’s automobile?”

There were tears in Loki’s eyes, though he refused to let them fall as he searched Tony’s eyes desperately. The alpha sighed deeply and turned away for a moment, gazing out at the lawn filled with bits of machines sprawling out in front of them.

"I'm sorry for hurting you," Tony murmured softly. "I'm sorry for the way I acted. It was wrong, and I think at the time I knew it was wrong. The omegas never seemed to mind, but perhaps they were just hiding things the way you do with Gast. I didn't stop to think about what they might be thinking or feeling. They seemed happy, and so I thought they were. You seemed happy, though, too... I've made so many mistakes, Loki, but this? This isn't one of them. For the past two years I haven't had a single omega because I missed you far too much. My life with Peter as my friend has been like something I could've only dreamed of. Teaching him, mentoring him, has given me some of the best moments of my life. But you know which other moments I miss most?"

"I miss running through the fields, playing in the streams, and then coming home to curl up with my best friend; you. Thor and I were good buddies, but he was not the one I truly wanted to see. You know the difference between you and all those other omegas? As awful as it sounds, I must say that they never felt quite human or real to me. I know that's awful, and I'm sorry, but I never really talked to any of them. They never tried to talk to me, just to kiss me and be close to me, and so I returned those same affections. We warmed each other at night, and in the morning we'd go our own ways. But you? You have always been my best friend," Tony turned back to Loki as he ran a hand over his face.

"If you never want to be with me in that way, then I don't care," Tony sighed softly. "I won't sleep with another omega ever again. I haven't for two years and I won't, ever. I don't want to hurt you, I want you to be happy. But Loki, even if you don't want to love me, or can't love me, I want to be close with you again as a person. I want to be your friend again. I understand if you can't trust me, but... But that doesn't mean I won't keep striving to be the person you want me to be, and the person I want myself to be. Peter taught me that to truly support something is to live the way you want others to live. I realized quickly that I couldn't preach omega rights if I treated omegas like I did. Yes, I always ensured they were happy, and I never, ever took a lover without making sure that lover understood everything, but... But then Peter explained how he grew up, how he was taught that it is an omega's place to please an alpha. He was brainwashed, Loki, and what if those other omegas were too? I was doing nothing to truly help them, not really. I don't know..."

"You're a good person, Tony," Loki murmured, reaching over to grasp his hand tightly. "You really mean well, I know that. Omegas aren't the only ones being brainwashed. I could see the ideas being planted in Thor's head. He was strong enough to not let them take root, but people wanted him to be awful, I think. I thought one day he would just... give in. The whole world expected my brother to subjugate omegas simply because of his money, his title, and his designation. I thought he'd become like all the rest. Everyone knew that it was his right, as an alpha, to treat omegas badly. It was and is your right too, if you believe what society wants you to. And your father... I thought I knew how he was, and he already frightened me, but after what you've told me I wonder if he was worse than I imagined."

"You have no idea," Tony sighed softly, wrapping his arms around himself and pressing his eyes shut. "After mother died he just... something inside of him snapped. Sometimes I wonder if he didn't send me down to the basement so I wouldn't hear what he was doing with the omegas he brought in. They always seemed so scared... I always said I wouldn't be like him. I hope I never have been, but then... Then I..."

"You're not your father," Loki promised. "You never have been."

"But what if... What if I... I could've helped them more, I shouldn't have..."

"Tony, you're a good person. You were practically a child when your mother passed, and your father only ever allowed you home over the summer. Even then, it seems you had little control over life here... You could not have helped those omegas," Loki sighed.

“I tried though, you know?” Tony suddenly broke in, his eyes red. “I tried so hard. I would give them food when father wasn’t looking, and I did my best to distract father when he was angry. I... I tried. I didn’t understand why it had to be like that, why he had to be like that. He wasn’t before mother died. He used to hug me and... and we played games sometimes. Do you remember? He taught me how to play chess when he wasn’t working on designs for the factory. He wasn’t home much but... but when he was he wasn’t cruel. He didn’t treat mother badly, ever. And then when she died he got so bitter, he started drinking. When I was in America, I learned about mind doctors. I thought he needed one, but he got angry when I asked one to come by once. I did finally convince him though, you know? He... he said he’d go to the mind doctor, finally. He was on his way there when his buggy crashed, when he... when he died. He was finally trying to get help...”

“I wish you’d told me these things back then,” Loki sighed. “Everyone thought your father was reclusive, but we had no idea... I’m sorry you had to suffer alone.”

“It’s certainly not your fault,” Tony chuckled sadly. They stood in silence for a long moment, Loki’s hand resting on Tony’s, before the alpha looked up and murmured, “What do you say we go to the river?”

“It feels wrong going there without Peter,” Loki murmured. “It feels wrong to have fun while he is likely suffering. But then perhaps there is nothing we can do until Bucky returns with information. She legally owns him, and the entire fortune. I don’t know of any loophole...”

“If there is, Bucky will find it,” Tony replied softly.

“I know,” Loki chuckled. “Alright, we can go to the river. It still feels wrong, but... Well, I suppose it isn’t going to hurt Peter any worse than if we sat around here and waited for Bucky’s information. Do you wish to take the automobile?”

“If you don’t mind,” Tony nodded.

“Fine, on one condition,” Loki’s mouth pulled into a tight smirk. “I get to learn to drive.”

“You want to?” Tony’s jaw dropped.

“It’s the way of the future,” Loki grinned. “Haven’t you read the articles?”

“I wrote the articles,” Tony chuckled. “Actually, that’s a lie. Peter wrote them and the magazine credited them to me because that’s what magazines do.”

“Of course,” Loki rolled his eyes. “Anyway, we’re in a new century and somehow I think this automobile thing just might catch on... I want to learn to drive.”

“And so you shall,” Tony grinned.

As it turned out, Loki wasn’t nearly as good of a driver as Peter had been, but he didn’t drive them off the road and for that Tony gave him a round of applause.

“Oh, do shut up,” Loki rolled his eyes. “Come on, it’s warm today and I want to get my feet wet.”

“You do?” Tony blinked. “That’s not very proper.”

“I didn’t drive all this way to be proper,” Loki replied, hopping out of the auto. He led Tony to the river and then tossed his shoes aside, rolling up his flowing trousers and pinning them before wading into the water. Tony’s jaw dropped, and Loki rolled his eyes. “Look, do you want to get in or am I having all the fun for myself.”

“You’re not like I remember,” Tony murmured, placing his shoes aside.

“No, I suppose I’m not,” Loki huffed, beginning to circle Tony. “I’m not like I remember either, but I’ve been thinking and I’ve come to a conclusion. I could remain stuck in the spot where my father wanted me to be. I could remain stuck where I thought I wanted to be. Or, alternatively, I could grow into someone new. Again, we are in a new century and perhaps this is the perfect time for growth. Bucky has been teaching me about all sorts of things I never knew. I think even you could learn a thing or two.”

“Like what?” Tony hummed.

“Like the fact I’ve been distracting you this whole time,” Loki smirked, and then he suddenly pulled on the bit of rope he’d been twisting around Tony’s legs. Loki broke into a fit of laughter as Tony splashed into the stream, coming up sputtering.

“Oh, you want to play it that way, do you?” Tony smirked. “Well I… Wait look at that!”

The moment Loki was distracted, Tony pulled him, too, into the water, bursting out laughing as Loki glared and pounced on him which went them both rolling against the light current. They tussled gently until Loki pinned Tony down, his knees on either side of Tony’s hips and a grin on his face.

“Give up?” Loki demanded.

“I dunno if I should,” Tony grinned right back. “It might not be proper.”

“You know what else isn’t proper?” Loki hummed. In that moment, the world felt like it faded to the background. The water rushing around them was nothing but a sweet reminder of the times they used to have, and it was that reminder that urged Loki to bend down and press his lips to Tony’s. The kiss was stiff at first, but it quickly melted into soft moans and gentle bites until Loki pulled away.

“You know,” Tony gasped softly, staring up at the omega. “You’re right, that wasn’t very proper. But damn if I don’t want to do it again.”

“Such language,” Loki hummed, tightening his grip. “If I had soap I’d wash your mouth out with it.”

“There’s some back at the house,” Tony smirked. “But I think you’ll find it’s slipperiness has many other uses too.”

“You are ridiculous,” Loki chuckled softly. “And very wet. I think we need a good dry off in front of the fire.”

“But we just got here!” Tony pointed out.

“True. I suppose there’s no reason to leave quite yet then, is there?”

“No, I don’t suppose there is,” Tony chuckled. “Come on, let’s go to the deeper bit, I’m dying for a good swim.”

“You know,” Loki chuckled. “So am I.”

“Do you remember when we used to explore the attic? How we thought it was haunted because we heard noises up there but it turned there it was actually a family of rats? And you wanted to keep them as pets?”

“Of course I do. I managed for a good while before father found out,” Loki sighed and grabbed the fire poker, prodding at the dying embers and sighing softly. “They were smart, though. He was going to have them killed, but they got away.”

“Smart little rats. You know they were actually sort of cute? Reminded me of you a bit,” Tony murmured, laughing when Loki glared at him before snuggling closer on the loveseat. He smiled, pressing a kiss to Loki’s temple as he murmured, “You know that it’s nearly two in the morning and we should probably be sleeping.”

“I know,” Loki murmured. “But when you sleep, you dream. I don’t want to dream. I want to be here with you, cuddled and happy.”

“Imagine if Peter were here?” Tony smiled warmly. “He’d say something witty and smart, and we’d all laugh.”

“I say things that are witty and smart,” Loki glared.

“So do I,” Tony replied. “But there’s something special about the way Peter says it that makes me smile.”

“I think you’re secretly in love,” Loki smirked.

“No, actually I’m not,” Tony chuckled softly. “But I do care for him quite a lot, but in a different sort of way. I did once, or I tried to, and then... Well I cringe when I think back on it. Neither of us were thinking clearly. No I do love him, but not as a lover if that makes sense? He’s a very good friend, he’s almost become like a brother. He’s like a little brother.”

“Careful, little brothers like to play tricks,” Loki smirked.

“I’ve had my fair share of those,” Tony admitted, breaking into a yawn as he murmured, “You know I love you?”

“I do know that,” Loki murmured. “So let’s not pretend that Peter is your brother because that would mean that I’m courting two brothers and somehow that seems very strange.”

“I suppose so,” Tony chuckled. “Though courting two people at all is a bit odd unless you’re us.”

“Yes, unless you’re us,” Loki smiled. He noticed Tony’s eyelids drooping, and so he pressed a kiss to Tony’s forehead and murmured, “Go to sleep, darling. I’ll watch over you. You’ll be safe with me. Goodnight, Tony, I love you.”

The two sat in comfortable silence, and slowly Tony’s breaths evened out and he fell asleep in Loki’s arms. The omega, too, felt himself drifting off, yet a commotion downstairs woke up him, and he startled when someone knocked on his door.

“What is it?” Tony sat up quickly. “Morning already?”

Loki stood to open the door, blinking when Bucky stood there, panting softly.

“Loki,” Bucky stated. “They found your brother.”

The group downstairs was a ragtag crew, and Thor was standing in the middle with a braid in his lengthening beard.

Loki had been fully startled awake, though Tony next to him was still struggling with tying his robe into place. When Thor spotted them, he broke into a smile and rushed forward, beaming.

“Brother!” He declared. “I am glad to see you’re alright.”

“And I you,” Loki gasped. “I was so worried. Are you alright? Who are all these people?”

“My friends,” Thor declared. “This is Captain Quill and his crew. They were meant to bring me to Canada, but when they heard of our plight they agreed to bring me home so that I might help you and Peter, and try to bring about a righting of the wrongs that have been done. But oh, Loki, I’ve been on the sea and... and I must tell you about it! Come, I have so much to tell you!”

“I... alright,” Loki chuckled softly, glancing at the crew who were awkwardly standing in the middle of the hall, looking around at the grandeur in awe. “You seem to be in a good mood.”

“I am,” Thor agreed. “There is nothing like the sea! You would love it, Loki. The salty air, the calls of the gulls, the waves washing over the deck!”

“I think you probably like it a bit more than I would,” Loki chuckled softly. “But really, I’m just happy to see you safe!”

“Do you mean to say you were worried about me, Loki?” Thor grinned, to which Loki scoffed.

“Oh I knew you’d be alright, you big oaf. I simply didn’t know if you’d, uh, when you’d be returning, that’s all,” Loki replied, chuckling softly.

“Is Peter still in that witches clutches?” Thor pauses halfway go the sitting room.

“Yes,” Loki nodded. “We’re working on that.”

“Ah, good, but for now the tales of the sea!” Thor led Loki away. Loki glanced back and shrugged at Tony when they made eye contact, and Tony waved him along before turning to the crew.

“Thank you Sam, Steve,” Tony smiled. “And thank you to all of you for bringing him back.”

“Is there a reward for his return?” Rocket asked hopefully.

“Yes, you get to glimpse Loki smiling. That’s reward enough,” Tony replied with a soft smirk.

“Now then, were you planning to stay for a midnight snack?”

“If you had one I’d take it,” Quill replied. “What? I’m hungry! We haven’t eaten since we got off the boat.”

“Peter,” Gamora hissed softly. “Sorry, we’ll be going now.”

“No no, by all means, we have plenty left over from dinner in the ice box,” Tony smiled. “And I think there’s a small chance you could have information about the person who gave you Thor? Her name is Hela. Did you know anything about who she was?”

“Hela? Strange name,” Drax hummed.

“We didn’t know anything about her,” Quill shook his head. “She gave us a ton of money, told us to take him to Canada, off we went.”

“They call themselves pirates,” Bucky spoke up. “But they’re the Robin Hood type.”

“I see,” Tony nodded. “Where’d you sail from?”

“This time? Southampton, but we sail from wherever we want. Oh, drumsticks! Now this is good eating,” Rocket hummed, eyes widening as Tony took the food and placed it on the table.

“We don’t like Southampton. Too many bad ships,” Mantis spoke up, even as Gamora hushed her.

“Bad ships?” Tony made eye contact with Bucky.

“We were there to try and connect with my sister who works in a pub there,” Gamora spoke up. “But it was not to be, and anyway we were given Thor.”

“But about the bad ships?” Tony pressed. The crew looked at each other, clearly unhappy with this then in the conversation, but finally Quill spoke.

“Just some rumors, talk gets around in the sailing world,” Quill shrugged. “We’re pirates, but we’ve got standards.”

“Yeah, we take money from rich people like you, but don’t worry, it’s only the bad ones,” Rocket picked his teeth with a chicken bone. “You seem pretty decent.”

“Anyway,” Quill glared at Rocket. “It could be all rumors.”

“You mean the omega slave trade,” Bucky suddenly spoke up, and the crew froze, raising their eyes to stare at him. Bucky chuckled softly, murmuring, “I know a thing or two.”

“You’re in the papers,” Gamora murmured.

“I suppose I am,” Bucky nodded.

“Hey, yeah, I know you!” Rocket nodded. “You’re like one of us. Well, sort of.”

“I am Groot!” The child spoke up, and Rocket chuckled, ruffling the child’s hair.

“One of you?” Bucky hummed softly, raising his eyebrows.

“I think we’re done here,” Gamora suddenly growled. “Come, we’re leaving. There is nothing these gannets can offer us.”

“True, but we could turn you in,” Tony pointed out, and the group all froze.

“So what, you’re blackmailing us?” Gamora hissed.

“We returned your friend!” Quill cried.

“Look,” Bucky sighed. “We aren’t turning you in, Tony was... making a bad joke. If you had any information about that, it would be most appreciated. As you know from the papers, I work hard to help as many omegas as I can. Steve had enough time in the carriage to find out that you’re decent enough people, and that you don’t support the trade of omegas. If you have information, I’m someone who could help.”

“Look,” Quill sighed. “We don’t have much, okay? Just rumors, but...”

“Just say it,” Gamora growled. “I don’t stand with him any longer.”

“Who,” Bucky’s eyes narrowed.

“Captain Thanos,” Gamora murmured. “The pirate? I was his daughter until I got fed up and left. I don’t know what he’s done now, I haven’t known for years. But...”

“He used to transport omegas across the sea and back,” Bucky nodded. “I know who he was. He disappeared.”

“He’s probably dead,” Gamora nodded. “My sister says she hasn’t heard from him either. She left too, and later decided to try and kill him, but she never got the chance before he disappeared. I can confirm that yes, we used to frequently use the docks of Southampton as well as Liverpool and occasionally London. But that’s as a long time ago, I don’t know anything about the trade now! I swear it. I’ve spent my life distancing myself as best I can.”

“I understand,” Bucky nodded. “Thank you. Sorry, I’m sure you’re hungry. Please, eat.”

“We need to return to our ship,” Gamora spoke. “We shouldn’t leave it unwatched. We only all came now because we wanted to see Thor off.”

“Yeah, he’s like part of the crew and he was only with us a couple days,” Rocket shrugged.

“He is good,” Drax agreed. “We shall all mourn his loss.”

“You should write next time you’re in London,” Bucky smiled. “I think Thor enjoyed his time not the ship, too.”

“Well we’re going to London next, actually,” Quill stayed. “We’ll write before we leave, yeah?”

“Sounds good,” Tony smiled. “But who is awake to bring them back to Southampton because I’m not.”

“I will.”

Everyone turned to see Dr Banner standing in the doorway, already dressed.

“I’ll take the auto so it’s a bit faster,” Bruce explained. “Come on, I’ll get you home.”

“Home?” Drax blinked.

“Yes, to your boat. Isn’t it your home?” Bruce asked.

“I suppose it is,” Quill chuckled. “Who are you?”

“Call me Bruce,” Banner smiled. “And give me a bit of chicken, it’ll be a long journey there and back, I’d better eat.”

The group chatted softly, but Steve pulled Bucky aside, speaking in a whisper.

“Do you believe that’s all Gamora knows?” Steve murmured.

“Perhaps not all,” Bucky hummed. “But I do trust her. Whatever she’s holding back, it is for a good reason, perhaps to protect herself and her friends. I know her sister. Her name is Nebula and she’s very active in rescuing omegas and trying to send them home to their families. I’ve made contact with her before, we’ve even worked together briefly. She never mentioned that Thanos was her father, though. I had almost forgotten about Thanos, really, it’s been so long since he went missing. When we first came to England I studied him closely, for he used to work for a psychiatric

hospital that specialized in supposedly disturbed omegas, but he left that life to become a pirate, likely because he realized being a pirate pays more... I suspect he did go down at sea, but it's interesting that the same port he sailed out of is the one where the trade is still active. I've heard stories that Liverpool has an active trade as well..."

"Something to look into?" Steve hummed.

"Perhaps," Bucky murmured. "But first Peter. I talked to Shuri and she's getting me in either tomorrow or the next day. Before anything else, I'm going to try to find a way to get him free."

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much to everyone who's been sticking with this story! I love hearing your comments and opinions of what you think could be happening... Also I hope my Iron Frost content here was okay, I haven't written Tony/Loki much so hopefully it's good :) Hope you all have lovely days!

Electra Heart

Chapter Notes

Hello all, I'm so sorry for missing my usual Tuesday update. This week has been so hectic, and next week will be too so my next update will probably be on Thursday? We'll see. Anyway thanks for reading, hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

I'm Electra, I'm Electra Heart

Only living, living in the dark

Lights they blind me

Can we go back, go back to the start

Where the holy father made his mark

Lights they blind me

Can we go back?

For forgiveness you could always pray

That the sickness, it could go away

Lights they blind me

Peter's life had changed many times, though he'd always thought the most violent change had occurred when his uncle was killed and his aunt had been forced to send him to Oxford's School. As a child, his aunt and uncle hadn't liked to impress the differences between omegas and alphas. Rather, they'd allowed Peter to develop into an independent person, despite or maybe because of his designation. Oxford's School, on the other hand, spent every moment of everyday impressing upon him what it meant to be an omega. He'd learned freedom was inconsequential and happiness was serving an alpha.

Of course, Peter had never been a star pupil, for submissiveness didn't come easily to him. Still, he'd eventually accepted that happiness was serving an alpha, until suddenly it wasn't. Loving Loki had been perhaps the best decision and time in his life. Once Loki was gone, Peter had learned the true meaning of loneliness, though he saw his aunt far more often than he had in years. Besides, Tony was an incredible friend. Now, though, once again his life had taken a great shift, forcing Peter to once again readjust his world view or be crushed by the world.

If nothing else, Loki's teachings from more than two years ago did come in handy, for Hela expected full obedience, and Peter had quickly learned that going against her resulted in lashes that Peter could only pray would not scar. Alternatively, Peter discovered that if he was good in her mind, Hela would be incredibly tender with him. Although Peter did wish to fight, something in her eyes frightened him enough that Peter kept quiet, silently hoping to either be rescued, or find a way to escape. Or rather, that was his mindset for the first few days, until the evening when Hela had a

guest over.

Peter was kneeling by her side, his cheek pillowed against Hela's thigh. Her hand in his hair might've been comforting if it didn't twist his stomach into knots, or perhaps his nausea was from lack of oxygen for he was fairly certain the collar around his neck was far too tight. He'd allowed his eyes to drift closed in a weak attempt at a nap, when Hela hummed softly, setting her pen aside and declaring, "So, you've finally made it? Excellent. How are the preparations coming, old friend?"

"Oh, it'll be the grandest party London has ever seen!" An alpha's voice bubbled with excitement, yet Peter froze, his heart almost stopping. He knew that voice. A subtle peek from under his eyelids confirmed his suspicion; Gast had come for a visit. He was beaming, and he peered down at Peter curiously before returning his attention to Hela. "I've invited every member of Hydra! All the best alphas will be there with their beautiful omegas, I can assure you. Oh, and as you requested I just sent an invitation to your bro- I mean, uh.... Thor. Such a good idea! Everyone will love him! He's such a... handsome devil, isn't he?"

"Indeed," Hela hummed softly, her long nails scratching at Peter's scalp gently. "And he is a noble omega, born to be added to Hydra, don't you think?"

"Oh, certainly! He'll be such fun at parties!" Gast replied jovially. "Perhaps you should bring the little omega, there! He's sort of cute, isn't he? Not beautiful like our Loki, but still so... so sweet!"

"No," Hela's fingers tightened in Peter's hair. "He will not be joining us. Do you think Loki will be there?"

"I do hope so!" Gast beamed. "I have not heard from him since Lord Odin passed on. Is he quite alright?"

"Oh yes," Hela hummed, stroking Peter's hair gently again. "I hope he comes as well. Reach out to him! It would be much more fun with him there, don't you think?"

"Oh, yes!" Gast beamed. "Well, I'll be off! I'll go send him a letter right away! Stark Manor, yes? I'd pay him a visit, but I'm not certain I wish to traverse Stark's manor with all its... modern machines!"

"Indeed," Hela rolled her eyes slightly. "They are so impractical, yes? Well, run along, I've got things to attend to."

Peter watched as Gast sashayed away, and then he turned his eyes up to Hela, who was studying some papers laid out on her desk. For a moment, Peter wanted to speak, but Hela beat him to it.

"So," she hummed, finally turning her dangerous, sharp eyes down to him. "Now you know my secret. I am a part of Hydra, and being Bucky's friend you certainly know what that is, yes? And here, you probably thought Hydra was filled with alphas. And ah, yes, perhaps the world should like to think so. I know Hydra should like to think so as well... If only they knew."

Peter startled when something that could only be described as a cackle dropped from Hela's lips. Peter swallowed hard, instantly on edge, and when her fingers found his hair again, Peter realized he was trembling slightly.

"I will not allow you to attend," Hela hummed. "For I rather like you, Peter, and I wish to keep you. You remind me of her, a bit... If you had darker hair. It's a shame, really, that such beauty was wasted on you. If only you'd been a noble, hm?"

“Why wouldn’t you keep me if I went?” Peter murmured. When the hand in his hair tightened, he forced out, “Mistress?”

“Because, my little sugar drop, it will be a bloodbath, and a glorious one.”

At this, Hela’s eyes shone, yet just as suddenly Peter’s blood went cold, and he blinked. His mind cleared of all training, and he quite loudly demanded, “What?”

“Hush, hush my little sugar drop,” Hela chuckled, her fingers running to the nape of his neck. “I suppose you won’t see the world out there, so what would be the harm in telling you? Of course, I wouldn’t wish to frighten you, but on the other hand, isn’t fright a magnificent emotion? To see it on another’s face, and know you put it there, is truly marvelous...”

“What do you mean?” Peter demanded softly. “A blood bath?”

“Walk with me, Peter,” Hela hummed, wrapping a bit of leather around her hand before clipping it to his collar and then pulling him until he reluctantly followed. It was only out of curiosity that he didn’t fight this new humiliation. Instead, his ears pricked and he watched as he was led into the second floor sitting room. Peter hesitated as Hela pointed to the couch, and he slowly crawled onto it, frowning when he was pulled into her arms.

“Now then,” Hela hummed. “Haven’t you ever felt that everything about this world is wrong? Go on, you may speak.”

“I don’t know,” Peter stiffened, swallowing as a finger trailed down his spine.

“Well, Peter, it is,” Hela hummed. “I learned that from a young age. My father never loved my mother, it was so very clear. He said he did, and we all pretended things were lovely, but he only cared for his own wealth. He taught me that power matters far more than anything else in this world. And yet he also taught me something else. Omegas do not have power, and they cannot acquire it. Father was a very interesting alpha, you know? I learned much from him. When I was a child he thought I might be an alpha. He taught me as he would an alpha child. He gave me lessons in arithmetic, literature, and science. He took me on hunting trips and taught me the thrill of the kill. I remember my first bleeding. We caught a fox, and he smeared its blood upon my face. He told me, then, that this was how it felt to be victorious. He said that peasants are like foxes, and that they may live until we decide they may not, for we were nobles, and we had the power to do as we pleased. He taught me that death is no barrier to success, but rather something that can be embraced when it is necessary and convenient. For what is a little bloodshed when it comes from those who are of no consequence? But then I became pretty, I became an omega. I became his little omega girl, the apple of his eye. The lessons stopped, for I was to be married off for money, because there were more than enough eligible alphas who could give father land. But I was not made for a cage. Omegas of nobility never are.”

Peter hesitated when a bit of food was held to his lips, but after a long moment he accepted it, for his empty stomach was aching.

“Father, of course, never understood,” Hela went on, the purr in her voice mounting in anger. “He thought alphas would always be able to control omegas, that their power would be greater than anyone else. He taught me independence only to turn around and teach me humility. But what if, Peter, there could be a noble omega who was not subject to the whims of others? Instead they could control others so perfectly that the alphas do not know they are being controlled. Go on, what do you think?”

“I don’t understand,” Peter swallowed, wincing when Hela pressed her nails into his flank.

“Father killed Loki’s mother. She was like you, a poor peasant. She would never be equal to me, and yet there was something charming about her. I rather think I loved her, but I knew father only saw her as a toy. She was sweet, kind, easily pushed to her knees. When he killed her, he taught me another lesson. To be as good as her is to be weak, and to never truly live. But it’s as he always said, death is of no consequence when it is necessary, just as it was necessary for me to try to kill his new wife and child,” Hela ground her teeth before continuing.

“And yet, from that day on I swore I would not allow a barbarian like my father to live in such a way. Oh, the alphas think they are grand when they take away power for themselves, but they’re all just like father. They think they know power, but none know true power until they win it for themselves. I was not gifted power like the alphas who would all become children in a fight. I fought tooth and nail to achieve what I have,” Hela’s eyes gleamed as she murmured, “That is true power.”

“Your brothel?” Peter murmured hesitantly. “Is that what you achieved?”

“Oh, you are simple minded,” Hela chuckled affectionately. “It helped me get my start, but that... that alpha, Valkyrie, just loved to go around ruining it. She had a lovely little business going, snatching all my prospective omegas and finding jobs for them! Of course many of them went to Gast, but then no one can win all battles. Anyway, my brothel is hardly of interest to me. It makes the money I need, I suppose, but that is the dream of a child. No, did you not listen? My goal is to cleanse the world of monsters like my father. I will paint the ground in their blood, same as father painted my forehead in the fox’s blood when I was a child. Some portray foxes as crafty predators, rather like an alpha. I suppose that makes me a fox in rabbit’s clothing.”

Hela slipped her hand into a drawer, coming out with a slip of paper. Peter peered at it and was curious to see that it was an invitation to some kind of formal dinner in London.

“This,” Hela purred. “Is the true goal. I ran into someone not so many years ago who wished to take my hand in marriage. They were a brutal alpha, one I could never love, but one that I could easily use. I began to speak on my disdain for the omegas of the lower classes and the depravity they bring to England. I spoke of an organization in America which sought to rid our world of that depravity, and I convinced the alpha that perhaps starting such an organization here in England might truly impress me. I am not so easily impressed, though, and so I allowed his plans to grow and spread across Europe. Hydra truly is like a serpent. You cut one head off, and two more grow to take its place. It is like a disease, like ivy, spreading all through Europe. It has never had a formal dinner, though, where all could gather from many countries, hundreds of alphas and their omegas, until now.”

“This is what Lord Gast is running?” Peter questioned softly, and Hela chuckled.

“Running? That idiot is lucky he can run his own stage as well as he does. No, he is simply a player in a masterful show. It will be the biggest gathering of depravity this county has ever known. And yet it isn’t only those alphas and their omegas, but my own omegas as well. I have discovered the smallest of explosives, though they are some of the most destructive yet known. My omegas will not even know what they are, but they will place them strategically and when the time is right... Well, you can imagine what might happen when they begin to activate.”

“You mean... You mean you’ll set them off at this event?” Peter paled. “Truly?”

“No better time, darling,” Hela purred. “Thor was foolish enough to return, so I suppose I can take down two birds with one stone. I shall be saddened if Loki goes, but then it will be rather convenient. No questions then who shall acquire the manor. And then, finally, not only will my lover’s death be avenged, but the world will be cleansed of the worst alphas in Europe.”

“But... all the omegas! The innocents who will be there!” Peter cried, yet Hela just shook her head.

“Their lives are of no consequence,” Hela replied. “They will not be missed, not like I would miss you.”

“But they must have someone! Families!” Peter cried. “Anyway, what you’re doing is wrong! All of those alphas might be bad, terrible, but then you should turn them over to the government! They can take care of them! I don’t think Loki’s mother would want you killing for her!”

“You’re likely right,” Hela murmured. “But then I shall do it for me, and for father. The thrill of the kill.”

“You can’t!” Peter shook his head, crying out when Hela yanked his hair and left him whimpering softly.

“That’s quite enough out of you,” Hela spat softly. “Don’t worry, little omega, I will leave before the destruction. As for the government, they are infested with Hydra. Their agents are everywhere, and telling them would do nothing. Oh, certainly some agents are clean, but bureaucracy takes far too long to do anything! This is much quicker, much more final. Once they are all gone, imagine how this world will be! If father were here, he would see that an omega could do everything and more than his ridiculous alpha nobility could. But the old fool is dead, and so shall be all the alphas who believed as he did. So shall be his son, who will never be able to take what is rightfully mine. Thor never could resist a party, or so I’m told.”

“Please, Hela, this is wrong,” Peter insisted softly. “It sounds like your father hurt you long ago, but there are ways to heal. I... You could get help, talk to someone about how your father treated you! You’ll be killing so many people... and more than half of them will be innocents! Please, don’t. I don’t understand, what do you even wish to prove with this? You wish to eliminate the alphas, but for what purpose?”

“Have you listened to a word I’ve said?” Hela demanded. “Most of the rich and powerful alphas in Europe will be at this dinner. When they’re gone, their countries will be thrown into chaos. People will look to other alphas for guidance, but who will be there instead? Me, an omega raised from birth to be a noble, to be a queen. They will see that their precious alphas had no power when I stepped into their lives, and finally they will turn to me for guidance, and I will have the power father promised me since I was a child. Finally, the alphas will not be the leaders, the nobility. No, I will be.”

“Please, Hela, this isn’t sensible!” Peter insisted softly. “You’re... Please, I know a doctor, maybe he could help you! You could talk to him, you know, and we could try to find the good agents in the government and turn all these alphas in and then we could save all the omegas rather than killing them too! Think of all the omegas you could help.”

“I don’t care about helping them,” Hela spat softly. “They mean nothing. You mean nothing, except that I’ve taken a liking to you. Perhaps it is simply because I know father had taken a liking to you... Anyway, it doesn’t matter. I suspect he’ll ask me for my hand in marriage that night, maybe I’ll even pretend to accept, before I step out for the, uh, finale.”

“Who is he?” Peter asked softly, his eyes narrowing. “The leader of Hydra?”

“Enough questions,” Hela stood, tying Peter’s leash to the edge of a chair. “I am going out tonight for a nice dinner and a chat about the event. You’ll stay here until I return. Don’t make a fuss, Shuri is downstairs and we wouldn’t want to bother her, hm?”

Peter winced as Hela pressed a kiss to his forehead, and then she swept away, her black train trailing after her. Peter watched her go before he began to fiddle with his collar. Unfortunately, as usual, he couldn't find the clasp and so he curled up on the couch to think. He hardly felt as if he could blame Hela, for there was something in her eyes that told him she was sick, perhaps with power of perhaps with something else. Still, Peter knew he couldn't allow this to happen. The amount of lives that would be taken, if Hela's numbers were correct, would be nightmarish. Peter knew firsthand the depravity of some alphas, but he also knew that killing them was wrong, and killing their omegas was senseless. If she was correct, turning the Hydra members in might be incredibly difficult, but he felt that if anyone could stop this, it would be Bucky. Peter knew Shuri was working on bringing Bucky here, but in this moment Peter decided he needed to see Bucky now, while there was still time to stop this.

Peter waited until he was sure Hela must be gone before he started calling out for Shuri. He knew she was working downstairs today, and it wasn't long before he heard her footsteps outside the door. When she entered, he pressed his eyes shut, pretending he wasn't curled up on the couch in a collar.

"Hello Peter," Shuri whispered softly. "I brought you a bit of meat and bread. I know you're hungry."

"Thank you, but I've lost my appetite," Peter forced his eyes open, pushing the food aside. "Shuri, I have to talk to Bucky. Please, I don't know how, but you have to bring him here."

"I am working on it," Shuri nodded, but Peter shook his head.

"I need to see him tonight," Peter insisted. "Hela, she's planning something. I don't want to tell you what, because I don't want to put you in danger, but you have to bring him here. Please, it is literally a matter of life and death. Please?"

"Peter," Shuri frowned deeply. "What do you mean? Who's death?"

"Please," Peter insisted softly. "Promise me you'll try to bring him tonight?"

"Well she is out right now... the communicator! Thor had it installed years ago now, perhaps it is still connected to Tony's Manor! We haven't used it in years but maybe... I'll try, okay? I promise. And please, Peter, you need to eat. I know how little she's feeding you..."

"Thank you," Peter murmured, finally accepting the food. "You've been so kind to me, always, ever since the first day I came here."

"And back then we thought Loki was bad," Shuri chuckled weakly. It was easy for Peter to agree, and they clasped hands before Shuri stood and hurried on her way. Time passed incredibly slowly as Peter sat there, waiting for someone's return, whether that be Shuri, or Bucky, or even Hela. When he heard soft footsteps outside the room, he tensed and pretended to be asleep, but a soft voice startled him away.

"Hello Peter," Bucky murmured, kneeling by his side, the kindest of twinkles in his eye. "You called?"

"Oh, Bucky it's good to see you," Peter strained his leash as far as he could, leaning forward to pull Bucky into a hug. The other omega chuckled sadly, rubbing Peter's back and humming softly. "How'd Shuri get you in?"

"Servant's entrance on the second floor, there's a hidden stairway. Peter, it's good to see you as

well,” Bucky murmured. “We’ve all missed you, especially Loki. He wanted to visit you, but I couldn’t place him in that kind of danger.”

“Thank you,” Peter nodded. “Because there is true danger now, truer than you’d probably ever imagine.”

“What do you mean?” Bucky murmured, moving to sit at Peter’s side.

“This,” Peter reached over and snatched the invitation still sitting on the edge of the couch.

“A dinner party?” Bucky frowned. “You’re cordially invited to the first annual gentleman’s party? I’ve seen this! Thor got one today and we couldn’t make heads or tails of it. Hela’s involved in it?”

“It’s going to be a meeting of Hydra members from all over Europe,” Peter murmured.

“Hydra?” Bucky froze. “Hela is involved with Hydra?”

“Involved with it? It seems she’s being romanced by Hydra’s leader. It sounded like he’s throwing the event to impress her, but there is something wrong with Hela. The way she talks... she’s sick, Bucky, but what’s more is she’s dangerous. She told me this confused and complicated plot about how Odin raised her to have power, which was taken when she learned she was an omega. There’s so much anger inside of her, but she means to prove that she’s powerful despite everything. And the way she means to prove it is send in omegas with explosives. She means to kill everyone there, Hydra members and omegas alike. She’s going to kill them all.”

“How do you know?” Bucky spoke quickly, examining the invitation more closely.

“She told me just an hour ago or so, she went to meet the Hydra leader tonight,” Peter murmured.

“All of them in one place?” Bucky murmured. “And the Hydra leader? Did she say his name?”

“No, I tried to get it out of her but all I learned is it’s not Gast,” Peter shook his head.

“Damnit,” Bucky swore softly. “I’ve been trying to figure out his name! I come close, only to meet a dead end. Anyone who does know is afraid to say, or they’re dead. I have a connection in the government, a law enforcement agent who is willing to work with me against Hydra. I trust him exclusively, but he can’t make a move against Hydra until we get their leader or he’ll be killed by his fellow agents. He says his department is filled with them, and they don’t know he’s clean. If he tried to bring in any of them, he’d simply be eliminated and the organization would go on thriving. If we could bring in their leader, though, there may be a chance. We need someone on the inside. We need someone there that night that could identify their leader and bring his name to my connection.”

“What about Thor?” Peter suggested. “He got an invitation.”

“Thor is a very good person, but stealth is not his forte,” Bucky admitted softly. “I’d be too worried about him saying the wrong thing and either getting caught or killed. No, we need someone else... Perhaps Steve could get in, or me. Peter, will you be there?”

“No, she claims she likes me and doesn’t want me getting killed,” Peter replied softly. “I’m staying here. Speaking of which, though, whoever goes could get killed with the rest of them. Sure they could identify the leader, but then how do they stop the explosives?”

“Well we know they are there now, yes? I’ll see if my connection can be standing by, and when the leader is identified they could arrest him and then try to get Hela before she can detonate

anything. If they can't get to Hela, then we can warn people and get them out, ideally arresting as many as we can. But like I said, if we take down members on their own without taking down their leader then truly we've accomplished nothing."

"How would you get in?"

"I'll think about it," Bucky hummed softly. "Thank you, Peter, for telling me. I only wish we could be doing more for you. I'm working to find a way to get you out of here, but..."

"This comes first," Peter nodded. "I'll be okay, just work on this. The amount of lives she plans to claim..."

"I know," Bucky murmured. "Don't worry Peter, your message has been heard. We'll stop this."

"Thank you," Peter squeezed Bucky's hand. "You should get out of here before you're seen. And Bucky? Tell Loki I love him."

"I promise I will," Bucky smiled. The two hugged once before Bucky stood, slipping Peter a sweet before stepping from the room. He exchanged a few words with Shuri and made a call on the communication device, before slipping away into the night, leaving Peter curled up on the loveseat.

The trip to Stark Manor was relatively slow, as he did his best to remain in stealth. Bucky crept through fields and the village, but he balked when he arrived back and saw two strange carriages sitting in front. Frowning, Bucky crept forward in the bushes, and froze at what he saw.

Through the large front windows he could see Steve arguing heatedly, and Bucky was shocked to see T'Challa, Natasha, and Clint all standing there and arguing right back. Frowning, Bucky straightened himself off, cleared his throat, and then made it up the first steps before the door flew open.

"Bucky," Loki murmured from the other side of the door, his eyes dark. "Go, before they see you. They mean to arrest you."

"For what?"

"For the murder of my father," T'Challa stepped over, his eyes dark with hurt. "These pictures were just mailed to us from an anonymous source. They stated that they took the photos from their balcony but had been afraid to share the photographs, and just worked up the courage. It shows you on the roof, on the street where my father was murdered. You have lied for many years, but no longer."

"That isn't true!" Steve cried out, but Bucky held up a hand and shook his head.

"No, Steve," Bucky murmured. "Let it go."

"Let it go? No! You're innocent! Tell them, Buck! Just tell them the truth!" Steve demanded, yet he was cut off again when Bucky hissed softly.

"I am innocent," he insisted. "But I'm not... Steve, we can't. But there is something more important. Please, you have to listen to me. Hela, I just came from speaking with someone who knows her and she's going to host a huge event for Hydra agents. You may have seen or heard of it? Apparently she's sent out invitations to many prominent alphas, even Thor got one, though I think it is because she means to kill him there as well. The leader of Hydra will be there, and she means to plant explosives all around the event. She means to wipe out every person there, omegas

and alphas alike. Peter says she is bitter and angry, and means to prove her power as an omega with this statement. We must stop this! The head of Hydra will be at this event, and I have to go in and find out who it is. We have to stop this!”

“Come on,” Clint stepped forward, grabbing Bucky’s arm. “Stop making up lies. You’re coming with us.”

“Barton?” Bucky blinked in shock. “What are you doing? You’re... you’re an actor, you and Natasha...”

“Of a sort,” Natasha pulled a badge from her inner pocket. “Agent Romanoff, Intelligence Service. Agent Barton and I have been watching you for months now, trying to discover your innocence or guilt. It seems our case is closed.”

“We trusted you!” Steve cried. “You were our friends! He’s innocent, you can’t take him away.”

“Steve,” Tony murmured, putting a hand on his arm, yet the other alpha yanked away as Tony went on. “What if they’re right? What if he did it. We all believe in omega rights here, but not like that. Not through violence.”

“He’s innocent,” Steve spat. “And your friend as well. I can’t believe you would turn your back on us now.”

“I’m not!” Tony glared. “But the photos are there...”

“None of this matters,” Bucky spoke again. “Please, you have to stop Hela!”

“You’re just making up a story, again,” Clint glared. “Come on, now.”

“Barnes,” Natasha’s eyes flashed. “If what you’re saying is true, then someone else in your group will stop it. We will look into it, but you must come with us.”

“Please,” Bucky begged, and Loki swallowed hard when he made eye contact with the omega. “One of you needs to. I’ll be alright. Please, we have to find out who the leader of Hydra is and shut this down! There will be so many innocents there, if nothing else!”

“Bucky, you won’t be alright,” Steve spat. “They think you’ve killed his father, don’t you understand what the penalty is for killing a noble alpha?”

“I don’t think he did, I know he did,” T’Challa glared right back. “I do not like it, but I know my father is dead and this man is his murderer. I wished to support you, but I will never condone that sort of violence. I will speak that he does not get the usual punishment. He will not hang, for I cannot condone that, but he murdered my father. He is a danger, and we cannot trust his story about this Hela.”

“Come on,” Clint began to pull Bucky away, though he was forced to pause when Steve surged forward to kiss Bucky. When Bucky whispered something to him, Clint glared and pulled him away, muttering, “Come on, we’ll be on our way. You’re under arrest.”

Loki watched in absolute shock as Bucky was lead out to the carriage, handcuffs were clipped to his wrists, and then the small group traveled away into the night. Silence was blanketed over the room, but when Tony tried to lay a hand on Steve’s shoulder, he pulled away slightly.

“Not now,” Steve glared. “We need to get in and talk with Peter. I trust Bucky, and many lives are in danger. We don’t have time for pity, or sympathy. We have to work.”

“Why would they take him now?” Loki spoke up something. “There’s something suspicious. What if Hela is involved in his being taken?”

“Maybe you’re right,” Tony frowned. “It’s an awfully big coincidence he would be taken the same night he went to speak with Peter...”

“I know where they’ll keep him,” Steve murmured. “I’ll visit him, try to find out as much as I can. In the meantime, someone needs to slip in and speak with Peter. We probably have the full story, but whoever does go into this event could be in serious danger if Hela is placing explosives all over. They’d have to be careful they got out safely. Beyond that, though, we need someone smart on the inside, someone who knows something about Hydra. Bucky always said that the way to take down Hydra was to take down their leader. There’s someone in the government, someone who trusted Bucky and... Well, I work for them. If we know the head of Hydra, I can tell him and he’ll be able to shut the event down. We need to work, fast.”

“I’ll go in to talk to Peter,” Loki volunteered abruptly. “I know a lot about Hydra, and I have connections to it. I know the Grandmaster, and if anyone is likely to be at this event, it’s him. I suspect I could get in with him. More importantly, we’d need someone to shut down the explosives, and I know just the alpha...”

“Me?” Tony raised an eyebrow. “Bruce?”

“No,” Loki glared. “Her name is Valkyrie. I’ve gotten a chance to speak with her occasionally and though she thinks little of me, I know I could convince her to work for this cause, if for no reason beyond the fact that she’d lose much of her money if this were to happen. She’s rough around the edges, but I believe she would work with us here. Anyway, she’s an expert at weapons and she’d be able to diffuse any explosive. I’ll contact her after speaking to Peter.”

“Valkyrie? You’ve seen her? She’s alright?”

The deep voice startled everyone, who turned to see Thor standing in the doorway. He looked half asleep with a tall mug of ale in his hand, but his eyes were narrowed as he moved to sit.

“How long have you been standing there?” Tony wondered.

“Long enough to understand the situation,” Thor replied, and Loki raised his eyebrows slightly.

“I don’t remember you being particularly quiet when you entered a room, brother,” Loki pointed out.

“It has been a long two years,” Thor admitted, his voice uncharacteristically soft. “There is much that has changed. That doesn’t matter now, though. We know Valkyrie! Don’t you remember her, Loki? She worked for father long ago when we were younger. She used to guard our home with another alpha woman. They were both loyal guards for many years, but father discovered they were in a relationship and he cast them both out. Perhaps if he hadn’t, then mother would never have been attacked as she was...”

“I do remember,” Loki’s eyes widened slightly. “They were orphans, yes? They’d been working for father since they were not quite fourteen, since practically before we were born! You were her friend, weren’t you?”

“I was,” Thor sighed softly. “While you stayed away from the servants, I used to let them teach me things. They taught me swordsmanship and how to properly use a knife. I’m glad she’s alright. You focus on Peter, while I will talk with Valkyrie. How can I find her?”

“She has a business, an office of sorts, somewhere in London. I think it’s in the West End? She’s a talent scout for omegas. I’m not sure where the office is, but I’m sure you can find it.”

“I’m sure I can,” Thor’s eyes gleamed, and he clasped his brother’s arm. “Have you seen her lover at all?”

“I haven’t,” Loki admitted softly. “I’m sorry. Good luck, though. She’s much more bitter than I remember her being, and maybe that’s why I never really recognized her, though she always seemed to know me...”

“When is the dinner?” Tony asked, looking around.

“In two nights,” Thor held out the invitation.

“Then we have three days and two nights to enact a plan,” Loki sighed. “Steve, you’ll get in to Bucky? I’ll speak with Peter, Thor you talk to Valkyrie. Tony, can you gather up any friends you have and trust? Maybe you all can be standing by that night to help get people out if the need arises.”

“Will do,” Tony grinned, saluting. Loki glared lightly at him, while Thor moved to clasp Loki’s shoulder.

“It seems you have become quite the leader,” Thor murmured. “Or quite the schemer.”

“A lot changes in two years, brother,” Loki replied with strained grin. “I’ve become what I’ve had to.”

“That isn’t true,” Tony chuckled softly. “Loki was always a schemer, always very clever, he’s just finally showing it off because he can.”

“Perhaps, and because I have to,” Loki replied softly. “I understand anger, and bitterness, towards father. But Peter taught me love, and forgiveness. Then Bucky taught me how to be both good, and dangerous. We need all these qualities if we’re to succeed, and we have to succeed, if any of our efforts are going to mean anything. We can’t preach omega rights and then let her kill all those omegas. We can’t preach a just future if we allow her to kill even the guilty alphas.”

“When did you become one of us preaching things? I thought you didn’t like my group,” Tony raised an eyebrow, and Loki only smirked.

“Your group? No, the group belongs to the people; that’s what Steve always said,” Loki cast a glance at the soldier, who ducked his head in a slight incline. “As for me, it’s been a long time coming, but I feel more whole now than I have ever before in my life. But now we have a lot of work ahead of us.”

“True,” Tony nodded, slipping a hand into Loki’s. “So, is everyone ready?”

“I think so,” Steve nodded. “We’ll win this, together. And if we lose, we’ll do that together, too.”

Chapter End Notes

So, you finally heard about Peter... What do you think Loki will do? Were things with Bucky just too convenient, or is everything a big coincidence? As always, I look

forward to any comments, see you next chapter!

End of the Earth

Chapter Notes

Well I said the update would be on Thursday, and it's still Thursday where I am so success! Haha

Thanks for the comments last chapter :) hope you enjoy the coming climax...!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Do you ever think how this life could've been?

If you never took the chance, a leap of faith and dance

With losing it all

So just wait, wait for me

We're all living in the same universe

Where the stars collide as the planets turn

But I'll give my love, I don't care if it hurts

'Cause I'll love you 'till the end

Peter was still curled up on the couch when he heard a noise at the door. This time, he was sure it must be Hela, so he did the only thing he could and pretended to be asleep. Hela was unnaturally good at telling when he was faking, but still he did his best to even out his breaths and be completely still. Soon the noise at the door was gone, and so Peter almost started to uncurl and open his eyes, but this ended abruptly when he heard a floorboard creek right next to him. Once again, Peter did his best to freeze, yet he knew his breaths were coming too fast now; she'd know he was awake. He was shocked, though, when it wasn't her voice that met his ears.

"Peter," the voice said. "Oh, darling... I know you're awake. It's alright, it's me."

That made Peter's eyes fly open, and when they landed on Loki, Peter shot forward as far as his leash would allow, wrapping his whole body around Loki while he peppered him with dozens of kisses.

"You're here!" Peter cried softly, his hands twisting into the fabric of Loki's shirt as if they'd never let go. "Loki, you're really here! How'd you get in? Oh, love, I've missed you so much. You don't know how much I've missed you."

"But I do, darling," Loki murmured, stilling Peter's desperate cuddling with hands on either of Peter's shoulders. "Because I've missed you just as much."

Loki brought Peter in for a deep kiss, which the omega reciprocated enthusiastically, their lips moving soft and tender against one another. When they pulled apart, Peter's fingers twisted lightly in Loki's curls, stroking in the gentle way he knew Loki loved.

“What’re you doing here?” Peter questioned, looking past Loki to the closed door. “I don’t know if you’re safe here.”

“This is my Manor,” Loki replied simply. “You think I don’t know every secret door, secret passage, and every way to get around authority? Believe me, I spent most of my teen years escaping authority here.”

“Wouldn’t Hela know those ways too?” Peter pointed out. “She also grew up here.”

“Not the ones added after she left,” Loki smirked. “After mother was attacked, Odin installed a few more hiding areas. Like behind that book shelf, for example. There’s a little room there about the size of a broom closet with a ladder down to the kitchen. Just pull on father’s copy of Robinson Caruso.”

“Well however you got here, I’m happy,” Peter smiled, nuzzling gently against Loki’s neck. His lover still smelled of a soft peppermint, as he always did, and the sharp scent was incredibly comforting to Peter’s nerves. “Did Bucky’s message get through?”

“It did,” Loki confirmed. “But that’s why I’m here.”

“What do you mean?” Peter pulled away, studying Loki with a suddenly sharp gaze.

“When he got home, he was arrested,” Loki sighed. “By Clint and Natasha of all people. Turns out they aren’t just actors, they’re investigators who’ve been on Bucky’s case I guess for years now. Somehow photos of him near T’Chaka’s murder just happened to turn up tonight of all nights.”

“Clint and Natasha?” Peter’s jaw dropped. “But they’re actors! They were part of Tony’s group for years!”

“Seems they were more than what met the eye,” Loki replied with a soft sigh.

“But... I know Bucky said the government was infiltrated, but how could they know I’d said anything? There’s absolutely no way! I trust Shuri and she’s the only one who knew Bucky was here! Unless Shuri is in on this...”

“I doubt that,” Loki shook his head. “If Shuri is anything, she’s hard headed and follows her morals. She wouldn’t tell Hela anything if her life depended on it. No, there’s something else going on, maybe something we don’t know about. The dinner is in two nights, and it sounds as if we must put a stop to it, yes?”

“Yes, but without Bucky then how?” Peter questioned.

“I was very close with the Grandmaster,” Loki murmured. “I suspect I could get myself invited to this dinner.”

“What?” Peter paled for all of three seconds before he turned pink, bursting out, “No! Loki, you can’t. Bucky is used to these kind of high stakes missions, for you it’ll be too dangerous! Besides, that’s what she wants! I heard her speaking about it. She wants you to go because she wants you dead. She hopes you and Thor will both go because then there will be no question as to who owns the manor. Please, it’s too dangerous. There will be explosives everywhere, I can’t let you do this.”

“Peter,” Loki murmured. He ran one hand through Peter’s curls, the touch tender in a way that Peter had been aching for. “If I don’t do this, then who will? I have performed high stakes missions while working under Bucky and Steve. I’ve worked undercover enough to know how to lie, how to work a room. I made a choice some time ago that changed my life. I chose that instead of

dedicating my life to helping myself, I would dedicate my life to helping others. And I'm convinced this is the best choice I've ever made. If something were to happen to me now, I'd die feeling proud and with closure. I know I've done good things in my life, now, and I do not wish to stop. I've worked hard, Peter, to become the person I know you wanted me to be."

"What I want you to be, Loki, is alive and safe in my arms," Peter murmured. "There's no guarantee that whoever goes to this dinner will be successful. Loki, you could be hurt, or worse you could die. She means to kill everyone there, and it won't matter that you're her omega brother. She'll act just the same. I am happy about what you've done, but you have nothing to prove to me. I love you, Loki, for who you are. You don't have to become something different to be better. You're already the best thing that's happened to me, except perhaps becoming free and an inventor."

"I'm not doing this to prove anything," Loki murmured, pressing a kiss to the lobe of Peter's ear. "I'm doing this because it's the right thing to do. I didn't used to know or understand how to be a good person. You taught me, Peter, and for that I will be eternally grateful."

"If you're so sure you want to do this, then why did you come here tonight?" Peter murmured softly.

"Because," Loki pressed his forehead to Peter's. "I love you. I wanted you to know what I'm doing, and if something were to go wrong, I wanted to be able to see you one last time. I plan for everything to go right, of course, but I also know that I missed you, and that's not what I wanted to remember you by."

Loki made a soft noise as Peter pulled him into a hug so tight that he couldn't breathe for a moment.

"I don't want to lose you," Peter murmured into Loki's neck. "I can't stand the thought of one day being free of Hela and not having you to come home to."

"I know, darling," Loki murmured softly, a hand in Peter's hair. "I never want you to hurt. I want only the best for you. When I picked you out so long ago from your school, I thought you had a certain playfulness in your eyes. I've always been one for mischief, and I saw that same sense in you. I still see it, buried beneath everything that's happened. It's a spark of youth, of innocence that still hasn't quite been blown out. If I'm to leave you with anything, my love, it's to leave you with this. Don't let the world crush you as it did me. You're too good for them, Peter, for all of them. You're too good for me. I'll never understand what you see in me. Beneath all the grandeur I used to paint around myself, I never truly believed I was worth anyone's time. Perhaps that's why I acted higher than anyone else. But you, Peter, you started changing me the moment you care into my life. You showed me something good, something strong, a reason to fight. Don't stop fighting, Peter. One day there will be a world where people like you and me will be free, and when that day comes you can know that we helped that day arrive."

"I love you," Peter whispered, swallowing hard as he pressed kisses to Loki's neck. "I don't want you to go, even though I know that you have to."

"I know, my love," Loki murmured. "But don't weep for me. Remember who I've become, and feel happy that you made me so much more than I was. You fixed me, Peter, like one of your broken machines."

"I didn't fix you," Peter sniffled softly, stroking back Loki's hair. "You healed yourself."

Loki smiled pressing a deep kiss to Peter's lips again, and moaning softly when Peter's lips parted, soft and warm against his own. They shared in their affection for a long moment, locked in each

other's embraces as if they'd be safe from the world outside, before Loki finally let Peter go, leaving the boy to swallow down a soft sob.

"I'm sorry," Loki murmured. "But I'd best go."

"Loki," Peter reached out to hold his lover's hand, pulling him closer for just a moment. "Whatever you do, wherever you go, remember that you're strong, and good, and loved. When we first met, I didn't understand the hurt you harboured, and few truly do. No one understands the hurts of another, not really, but we've come so far and become so much, together. At first we thought we hated each other. And now? Now I don't know what I'll do without you. Losing you a second time is somehow harder than the first. This time I know what it'll feel like while you're gone. But remember, if we hadn't been brave then none of this would've happened. If you hadn't been brave then we wouldn't be kissing each other now. Remember, even if you're scared, I'm there in your heart whispering that you're the bravest omega I've ever known. You and Bucky both. You're survivors, and I'm so proud of you."

"I'm proud of you too, Peter," Loki replied softly. "Don't give up, ever."

This time they hugged, and Peter smiled, relishing the comfort. It ended, though, as all good things do, and this time Peter allowed Loki to step away.

"I love you," Peter murmured, smiling as he curled, a small figure on the big couch.

"I love you too," Loki replied softly. "But I'll see you again."

"Of course," Peter sniffled. "After the dinner, after the ball."

"After," Loki agreed. "I'll see you again. Goodbye, darling."

"Until next time," Peter agreed with a soft whisper, and then he was gone.

Bucky wasn't unfamiliar with cells, but the memories they brought back made him hiss and snark at even the smallest of noises. He much preferred to be quiet, dignified, gentle when possible, but the guards had been forced to shove him into this dark, musty cell due to his sudden struggles. It wasn't a conscious decision, it was a reflex. They didn't understand that, of course, and so Bucky ached all over from where the guards had hit him. Now, though, he was quietly curled up in the corner with his head pressed to his knees. He knew he was trembling slightly, so he murmured poetry to himself to try and forget where he was. It was poetry that his mother had said to him as a child. She hadn't known how to read, but she made up poems herself and told them to him so that they'd be remembered, since she didn't know how to write.

The poems comforted him, ever here, and eased the memories of his time locked up as a child waiting to be bought, locked up in basements waiting to be used... Bucky hissed, curling up tighter and more forcefully reciting the poetry. He was halfway through a poem about the beauty of a spider's web at dawn with dew clinging to the silken strings, when footsteps made Bucky go silent. He was surprised when he heard a key in the lock, followed quickly by a voice filled with anger.

"What do you do to him?" The voice demanded in a sharp hiss. "I'm going to have a word with your superior when we're done here. Go on, get out of here."

"Steve?" Bucky looked up, swallowed hard, and his face lit up despite himself as Steve hurried over to pull Bucky into a hug, which the omega happily reciprocated.

"I'm sorry it took me a day to get here," Steve murmured. "At first they didn't want to let me in, but I got a letter from Fury and that did it. Are you alright?"

"A day?" Bucky blinked. "What time is it?"

"Four in the afternoon," Steve admitted softly. "Like I said, I'm sorry."

"No, it isn't your fault," Bucky shook his head, sitting up a little straighter as he tried to get his bearings. "I... the dinner, have you made any progress?"

"Loki is going," Steve confirmed. "He's speaking with the Grandmaster today. Thor is talking with an alpha who should be able to disarm some of the bombs. Her name is Valkyrie?"

"She works with Gast, yes?" Bucky murmured. "I don't know her well, but I'm heard of her. She doesn't actually sell omegas so she's never been on my radar. Did Fury say anything when you spoke with him?"

"His hands are tied," Steve sighed. "If he were to act, they'd take him down and the dinner would go on as planned. We have to bring in the head of Hydra, whoever they may be, and then he should be able to bring down the whole organization in England. He had heard of the dinner, but he didn't know the head of Hydra would be there. I told him about Loki and he let me know that there will be back up standing by. He knows two others, Hill and Coulson, and they'll be standing by. Don't worry, they're clean."

"Yeah I know," Bucky nodded. He hesitated, before he lowered his voice to something below a whisper. "I've worked with them. Listen, Steve, I have to tell you something, but you can't tell a soul. Alright?"

"What?" Steve murmured, also lowering his voice and leaning in close.

"I called Clint. He knows I'm innocent, he knows I was following T'Chaka to try and save his life from Hydra, in fact I had Clint take those photos of me at that time in case they'd ever become useful. I don't know what Fury has told Natasha, whether she thinks I'm guilty or not. I don't even know what T'Challa thinks," Bucky sighed softly, rubbing the bridge of his nose. "But I called Clint and told him to take me in. I was careful that night, but I'm fairly certain Muninn saw me. Hela and all of Hydra is more than aware that I'll take them down, no matter the cost. So long as I was out there, they'd be expecting me to show up and ruin things. They've been on my tail, Steve, trying to piece things together. With me out of the picture, I can almost guarantee their security will be much more lax, allowing Fury and all of you the freedom to surround the place and jump into action should you be needed."

"Buck, you set this up?" Steve hissed softly. "You wanted to go to prison?"

"It was needed," Bucky replied softly. "Clint and Natasha are clean. I am completely certain they aren't involved with Hydra. Them, Fury, Coulson, and Hill are the only ones I trust. You can trust them too. But don't speak to them about this, alright? The world has to believe I'm stuck here behind bars. As far as I know, Clint and Fury are the only ones who know I'm innocent. They know Hydra killed T'Chaka, in fact I'm fairly certain it wasn't just Hydra, but that Hela was involved. He was working on a plan to peacefully begin taking apart brothels in London, enacting laws so that omegas would be taken from the brothels and put into factory jobs. Not a vast improvement, but still progress. Hela would've been threatened."

"Why haven't I known about any of this?" Steve complained softly. "I could've helped, Bucky!"

“The fewer who knew, the better,” Bucky replied softly. “I’m only telling you now so that you aren’t surprised if Clint and Natasha show up at the dinner. They’re clean, you can trust them. Just know that they’re agents and could be doing anything. I don’t know Fury’s plan for them, but just... if you see them, they’re on your side. Got it?”

“If Fury knows you’re innocent, then why did he put you here?” Steve looked around the musty little cell.

“The illusion has to be complete,” Bucky sighed softly. “Yes, I hate it. Yes, it’s awful. Yes, it brings back memories, but it’s necessary. I’ll be alright. You, though, you have to be safe. You should tell Stark where Clint and Natasha’s loyalties lie if he’s going to help you do anything at the dinner. Use your own judgement about anyone else. And Steve? I love you.”

“Aw Buck, you know I love you too,” Steve sighed, reaching to pull Bucky into a tight hug. They held each other in a warm embrace, Bucky pressing a kiss into Steve’s neck, before he finally pushed the alpha away.

“You should go,” Bucky sighed. “I’m sure you have work to do. I’ll be alright here. You just... stay on top of things, you got it punk?”

“Yes sir,” Steve replied with a wet little chuckle and a salute. “Hold on, you’ll get out of here.”

“Go on,” Bucky replied. “Before I kick you out.”

He smiled as Steve stood, calling for the guard to come and unlock the cell. Steve sighed as he slipped out, giving Bucky one more glance before he slipped away. Bucky’s last look at him was warm, was a smile, yet the moment he was gone the darkness closed in again, and he pressed his eyes shut. Someone let out a shout somewhere deeper in the prison, and so Bucky began to softly recite poetry once more.

“You know, I sort of feel as though everything has changed, and yet nothing has. You know?”

“Hm, what’s that? Sorry, I was falling asleep,” Tony yawned widely, turning over in the dark to face Loki. The omega was like a shadow in the bed beside him, and he reached out to rest a hand against Loki’s hip just to know where he was.

“It’s just that we used to have camp outs together before they knew I was an omega, remember?” Loki murmured. “When we were small we’d curl up under the stars, after Thor was already thoroughly asleep. You knew them all by name, and you taught them to me. I still remember them all. Whenever I’ve felt alone, I’ve been able to look up at the night’s sky and know you’d be watching the same stars as me.”

“That’s rather romantic,” Tony chuckled softly.

“It’s true,” Loki’s tone was defensive. “It helped me.”

“Then I’m glad,” Tony replied. “I’m always happy to save the day.”

“Oh shut up,” Loki chuckled, grabbing a pillow to hit Tony with. “Do you mean to tell me you don’t think fondly of those days?”

“Loki, I used to love camping out with you. The bugs, Thor’s snoring, the freezing cold, what isn’t there to miss?” Tony grinned. “But most of all, I remember you telling me stories about all the

books you'd been reading. You were an incredible story teller, you know that? You'd leave me hanging on every word. It's why I started reading in the first place, but reading a story could never compare with you telling me one."

"I liked the stories because even when the characters struggled, there was always something that kept them going. Even in the worst of times, they kept on, and sometimes they'd get a happy ending," Loki admitted softly. "It gave me hope that one day maybe I'd be happy, too."

"Are you happy now?" Tony murmured, cuddling a little closer.

"Almost," Loki hummed. "I would be if Peter were here. I would be if I didn't have to think about tomorrow."

"Hey," Loki sighed as Tony pushed a hand through his hair. "Whatever happens tomorrow, just know that you're so brave and you did everything you could. Your brother contacted his people, and they'll be standing by. Valkyrie agreed to slip in and try to find the bombs. And I'll be right outside, okay, just waiting for the signal to step in."

"I know," Loki whispered. "But what if it isn't enough? I'm sorry, but I know Hela. She's smart, incredibly so. What if this just... doesn't work? What if she sees through my cover?"

"Loki, do you want to know a secret? I knew many of the things you got away with as a child, as a teen. You told me of some of your plots, and I loved to watch them come true. But at the same time I knew there must be many things you were doing without telling me, and I never figured out what, nor did anyone else. You aren't a sneaky person, you invented the word sneaky. If anyone can go in there, find the head of Hydra, and alert Steve, it's you. I trust you, Loki, more than most people put together. And at the end of the night you and I are going to celebrate in every way we know how. Got it?"

"Every way?" Loki smirked. "That's rather open ended."

"Isn't it though?" Tony replied. "Don't worry, I believe in you. You're going to knock them dead."

"Figuratively, I hope," Loki replied. "Will you take me to dinner?"

"Anywhere you want," Tony confirmed. "Promise."

"Good," Loki nodded firmly. "Because I have a very important question to ask you, but it'll have to wait until tomorrow."

"Why?" Tony asked.

"Because, I do things right," Loki pressed a long kiss to Tony's lip, leaving the alpha breathless. When he finally pulled away, there was a smile on Loki's lips, and he pulled Tony to rest on his chest before pressing a kiss into his hair and whispering, "Sleep well, and I'll see you in the morning."

"You're so special, you know that?" Tony murmured. "You're the best."

"I know," Loki smirked. "And so are you. Goodnight, my love. Tomorrow is another day, and tomorrow we'll fix everything."

"Everything," Tony confirmed. "I can't wait."

Chapter End Notes

So, now you know what was up with Bucky... And what will be up with Loki. He's taking a big step, and we'll see how that goes... As always, thanks for reading and I look forward to what you think could happen next... Hope you have a great day, and see you next chapter!

Froot

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

I've seen seasons come and go

From winter sun to summer snow

This ain't my first time at the rodeo

I'm your carnal flower, I'm your bloody rose

Pick my petals off and make my heart explode

I'm your deadly nightshade, I'm your cherry tree

Come on fill your cup up, looking for some good luck

Good luck, good luck to you

“Oh, Lo-Lo, you have no idea how much I missed you, darling! Oomph, it’s good to, uh, have you back in my arms,” the Grandmaster pressed kisses against Loki’s neck before he hit Loki’s rump and then practically chomped off his earlobe. Sighing, Loki gave him one kiss in return before he pushed him away.

“I missed you too, darling, but I must finish my makeup for the show tonight,” Loki murmured, turning to the mirror and applying some dark lipstick. “It isn’t every night I entertain all your colleagues at once, hm?”

“Indeed!” Gast clapped. “And the big dog himself! You’ll just love him, Lo-Lo! He’s very powerful, so commanding! I’m told he’s ever so good with omegas. You know he understands omega psychology? He knows just how to... to get inside their heads and make them so happy with anything!”

“Really?” Loki hummed absently, applying some heavy mascara. “Sounds lovely, now please may I finish?”

“Oh alright, just be ready yes?” Gast patted Loki’s cheek before standing. “I’ll see you soon darling! And remember, this is the Ragnarok Theater, everything here must be perfect, so do your very best work!”

“Indeed,” Loki smiled, pressing a kiss to Gast’s cheek before sending him on his way. The moment he was out, though, Loki breathed a deep sigh. He felt like he had returned to a nightmare and he needed to wake up. He’d gotten comfortable waking up with Tony over the last few days, comfortable imagining a life where he wasn’t thought of as a toy. Still, another urge inside of him was almost excited. He’d always wanted to be an actor, and tonight really he was putting on a show. And if they wanted a show, he’d give them a show.

Peering into the mirror, Loki smudged a small bit of rouge on his cheeks, fixed his eyebrows, and then nodded. He knew he looked stunning and that all the alphas’ mouths would be watering when they saw him. All there was left to do now was to play the part.

Loki stood, smoothing his skin tight vest and flowing tunic underneath before marching out to the backstage area. The Grandmaster spotted him there, and he marched up to kiss Loki's cheek again.

"Look at you!" Gast giggled. "Oh, I do love a good looking omega... Girls? Yes, come here! Loki, these omegas will be your backup on stage, yes? Just control them, that one is a little shy of the alphas, but we're working on it, aren't we lovely?"

"I'm sure we'll be fine," Loki smiled charmingly. "Now you'd best run along to the audience. I can handle this here."

Gast nodded before scampering away, but the moment he was gone Loki turned sharply to the omegas.

"Carina?" Loki blinked when he spotted one he knew. "Do you know these girls?"

"We've been performing together," Carina confirmed, crossing her arms. "Why?"

"Because... Because I'm concerned and might need your help," Loki sighed. It was a gamble trusting them, but he knew that Carina at least would probably be on his side, she was not brainwashed as some of Gast's omegas were. "I happen to know that there are omegas here carrying weapons. I don't want to worry anyone else, but we have to find out who they are. They are omegas employed by someone named Hela, do you know of her?"

All but one of the omegas had blank, confused faces. That omega, though, nodded sharply, shivering.

"She caught me first," she murmured. "I remember her... You sort of look like her. She would rent us out... If you think Gast is bad, she was worse, but what's worse is she was an omega. I thought she'd be kind since she was an omega but... but no, she was so cruel. She'd let the alphas do anything to us, some omegas died and she didn't care because she claimed we were lesser omegas than her."

"I'm sorry," Loki murmured. "But we might all die tonight if we don't locate these explosives. Please, can you help me look for any omegas who worked for her in the past and might be carrying them? They could be anywhere in the crowd. I believe they might also place the bombs, potentially. Just... keep an eye out, okay?"

"We will," she nodded, shivering. "Thank you for warning us."

"Come," Loki murmured. "It's time we get on stage."

The thrill of performing in front of an audience still made the blood rush in Loki's veins, and when he stepped onto the stage after he was introduced he felt adrenaline pumping. Still, he'd grown so used to this that he simply flashed a sultry smirk before launching into an old routine made new with bigger movements and flashing lights. From here on the stage he could see everyone in the house, and he did his best to look for any omegas in the crowd that might seem out of place. Unfortunately the theater was filled with omegas. They were draped over alphas' laps, kneeling by alphas' side, and standing in nearly every corner of the room. Those omegas were the ones Loki zoomed in on, for they were rather conveniently placed for no apparent reason. As the song reached its close, Loki bowed deeply and watched them from the corner of his eye, moderately convinced that he'd located the moles.

Once the performance was complete, Loki slipped off the stage and murmured to the other omegas, "You see those omegas standing around the corners? I think it might be them."

“Why would Hela would to do this?” Carina questioned suddenly. “With all these alphas in here? Aren’t they her friends?”

“I... yes, I think she’s just very unstable,” Loki lied easily. “I’m not even certain it’s true, but just in case I don’t want all these omegas to die. I don’t know if you’ll have a chance, but if you do please speak to them, alright? I have to stay near the Grandmaster.”

“Of course you do,” Carina rolled her eyes. Loki forced himself to smile instead of bristle, and with a quick word of thanks he slipped away into the audience to slide onto Gast’s lap and press a kiss to his cheek.

“You were spectacular, darling,” Gast purred softly, openly feeling up Loki. “So sensual. Now then, I think he’s coming out to make his speech any moment now. Aren’t you ever so excited?”

“Of course,” Loki lied, eyes trailing to the back of the room where the omegas were fidgeting nervously. “Oh, are the lights alright?”

Loki jumped when the room went black, but Gast simply giggled and kissed Loki deeply as a spotlight appeared on the stage.

“He likes to be dramatic,” Gast purred. “Anyway I’ve heard he might propose tonight to his omega lover!”

“Oh?” Loki blinked, glancing around the room. He froze when he spotted Hela sitting just a few tables over, and when she spotted him she waved, almost like an old friend would. It made Loki’s heart ache to think of how kind she’d been to him, only for him to find out it was all an act likely crafted so she could find out more about the Odin family fortune. It made his heartbeat speed up, but he at least trusted that the theater wouldn’t explode while she was still in it. That meant he had time.

A drum roll began, and Loki looked back to the stage. Several security guards lined up near it, and a few omegas rushed out to kneel near the front of the stage. The anticipation was certainly building, but Loki was much more focused on the corners of the room until a voice boomed over the theater that made the hair on the back of his neck stand on end.

“Welcome, my brothers, sisters, friends, children,” the voice both sounded as if it was being shouted and purred at the same time. “It is so good to finally meet you all, in person.”

Loki knew that voice, it was rooted in his deepest of nightmares, and when the gigantic alpha stepped onto the stage, Loki broke out in a cold sweat. Gast, along with many others in the theater, began to clap loudly, but Loki felt like he might crumple at any moment, his face the shade of new parchment.

“Tonight has been so much fun,” the alpha went on. “I enjoyed our little omega’s performance very much, didn’t you? You know I had the honor of meeting our little starlet many years ago. He was like so many of your omegas here, in need of shaping and molding so that we might have order, and peace in our world. He was a seed of chaos growing inside his father’s home, but he was easily malleable, as all omegas are. And you can see tonight, friends, what order and peace can be brought to our world when omegas understand their natural place. Look to your right and left, see how the omegas nuzzle you because they are happy with children in their bellies and your hands in their hair. Kings and Queens speak of creating peace through war. I say no! This is what ties us together, this natural order is how we can achieve peace!”

Loki felt like he was going to be sick. He pressed his eyes shut, and he wished he could press his

ears closed as well. Memories rushed back to him, memories of being tied in his attic, of being whipped until he agreed to cooperate, of being left for days without food until he'd do as the specialist demanded of him. He'd started with anger and spirit. When it had begun, Loki had been angry at his father, angry at his brother, and fully convinced he never wanted to date another alpha, but by the time it was over he hardly wanted to look at another omega for fear of remembering his lessons. Gast was right, this alpha did know how to get inside omegas' heads, but not to make them happy. No, he made them absolutely terrified. This wasn't just any pirate or mob boss, Thanos had started as a psychologist, understanding and studying the mind and human emotions, and Loki could tell in an instant that he had every alpha in this theater under his thumb. It made complete sense that he could've made more money as a pirate than as a doctor at a government hospital, and seeing him here was like hell on Earth.

"Darling?" Gast murmured as Thanos went on. "Are you cold? You're trembling."

"I... I'm not feeling well," Loki admitted. "I think I need to go out for some air."

"But he's calling for you," Gast murmured, taking Loki's chin between his fingers and turning it so that he'd look at the stage. Thanos' large hand was outstretched to him, and Loki gasped softly, his breaths coming in short huffs. Gast rubbed his back and then pressed a kiss to his temple, murmuring, "Go on, when Thanos calls you must listen."

Loki felt like he was made of wood, a puppet, as he stumbled from his chair and up to the stage. Thanos easily grasped him around the waist, lifting him up to deposit him upon his knees on the stage. One of his huge hands ran through Loki's soft hair, the motion comforting against waves upon waves of panic. Still, Loki managed to compose himself and flash the audience a grin, pointedly ignoring looking at Hela.

"This, here, is one of my best patients over the years," Thanos was saying past the cotton in Loki's ears. "He was accused of sexual promiscuity with fellow omegas, in fact his father caught him in bed with one. I was called onto the case, and this little omega showed a prime example of how much some focused lessons can help. You see him tonight with his alpha, my dear friend En Dwi, and he is a changed omega. No longer does he fight and cause scandals for his family. No, now he is gentle, sweet, and loyal to his alpha. He is a perfect member of our society! Imagine how peaceful our world would be if all omegas could be as easily molded?"

Loki wanted to stab Thanos in the throat, but instead he simply leaned into the touch as if he was playing a role. And he was, truly. He'd been playing a role his whole life, and this was not any different. Thanos chuckled softly, stroking his hair once more before his hand settled on the nape of Loki's neck.

"Of course," Thanos went on. "Not all omegas need shaping. There are many noble omegas who are already perfect citizens, the same as all of you are. Our aim, my friends, is not to be dominant over omegas, not at all! No, we simply want to achieve peace through the taming of them, so that the lower omegas will no longer involve themselves in petty crimes. They don't understand morals the same as you and I, and so they must be taught. Many noble omegas, though, need no teaching as they're already perfect. We have one such visitor tonight. The lovely, beautiful Miss Hela. Although she seems to have left the room for the moment, she is truly an omega of quality."

The moment those words left Thanos's mouth, Loki's world froze. When he refocused his attention on the audience, he realized that indeed Hela's chair was empty, and Loki's heart jumped into his throat. His eyes shot all around the room, and he spotted Valkyrie in the back speaking to one of the omegas. Loki tried hard to catch her eye, but she seemed too busy to meet his, and his eyes flew around again to see if there might be anyone else he knew in the audience. As it turned out, he

knew many of the alpha men, but they'd do him no good, that is until he spotted an omega by the door.

Clint was standing in the back, speaking softly to a doorman. He glanced up when Thanos gently hushed Loki when the omega made a soft noise despite himself, his panic rising. Clint swallowed, nodded to Loki once, and then slipped out. Loki hoped desperately that he was off to tell someone that he knew the head of Hydra, and Loki forced himself to relax again as Thanos continued on, speaking in his soft, commanding voice.

Loki was just tuning into Thanos' voice again when the audience broke out in claps and cheers for a reason that Loki didn't understand. He glanced around, before he flinched violently when something like a firework went off overhead, showering golden sparkles over everyone. The sharp snap of another one, combined with Thanos' hand still grasping his neck made Loki's head swim. Thanos began speaking softly to him as another one went off, but all he could focus on were the omegas near the corners of the room, and he began to struggle lightly, only to have a hand wrap around his throat and squeeze until he couldn't breathe, and the world became even more fuzzy and confused. Loki struggled weakly again, gagging and gasping for air best he could, when a louder boom echoed around the arena. There was a pause, only for a second boom to join the first.

For a long moment, Loki couldn't recognize anything as the hand around his throat let go and he gasped for air to fill his lungs. As he panted, the world suddenly came back with frightening clarity, and screams registered in his ears at the same time as he realized he was smelling smoke.

More screams began to cry out as another loud boom sounded, and Loki stumbled dazedly to his feet, coughing and covering his mouth with one arm. Thanos was nowhere to be found, but people were running for the exits, most of which were blocked by fallen debris. Loki coughed and wheezed, but he found a discarded scarf and he tied it around his mouth as he stumbled from the stage. Predictably, Gast had taken off and left him, but Loki spotted an omega crying out and pulling at a chain around his neck that had been tied to a theater chair leg. Clumsily, Loki stumbled over and, pulling a pin out of his hair, he picked the lock and wrapped an arm around the omega's shoulders.

"Come on," he murmured, pulling the omega along. "We need to find a way out of here."

A hole suddenly burst open in one of the walls, and Loki was fairly certain he heard Tony's voice calling in. Alphas and omegas alike dashed for that exit, while Steve, Natasha, Sam, Rhodey, Thor, and his friends slipped inside. There were several other people trapped either accidentally under debris or on purpose by chains and leashes, and Loki breathed a sigh of relief as Tony and his crew rushed to help. One half of the building was already collapsed, but Loki heard the roof creaking overhead on the other half.

"Hurry," he shouted loud as he could. "This place is going to collapse!"

It was likely only due to Valkyrie's meddling that the roof was still standing at all, and he thanked her silently for doing what she could. Loki rushed to kneel by another omega whose leg had been trapped under a beam. Together, Loki and the first omega pushed the beam off of her, and Loki almost picked her up since she cried out that she couldn't walk. He paused, though, when a scream of something like rage caught his attention.

"You two," Loki turned back to the two omegas suddenly. "You stick together and get out of here, I need to check something."

"But this place is going to collapse, you said so!" The first omega demanded.

“Then you both need to hurry, go!” Loki pushed them, watching as they helped each other limp towards the entrance before turning back into the building. He heard the sound again, and he rushed back onto the stage. The sight he saw made his heart nearly stop, and he rushed over to find Hela still inside, staring around herself in horror.

“Come on!” Loki tried to grab her. “We have to get out of here!”

“No! How could this have happened?” She demanded, pulling away. “I planned this, down to the last detail!”

The roof creaked loudly again, and Loki swallowed hard, making another grab for her.

“Come!” He demanded. “Sister, we can still escape! The theater will collapse, you’ll die! Come on!”

“I’m not leaving here without taking down Thanos and as many of his followers as I can,” she spat softly. “Omegas and alphas alike.”

“Hela, the authorities will catch Thanos, I planned for that!” Loki insisted. “They’ll end Hydra, but you don’t need to die! Please, come on.”

“The authorities will never catch Thanos,” she spat. “Alphas like him never get caught. Odin taught us that from birth, do you not remember? They hurt, and destroy, and ruin all that was once good!”

“Hela, you’re not wrong, but look around you! Odin was terrible, the way he treated us was terrible, but you are so consumed by hate that you’ve.... you’ve become worse than him! Look around you, look at the innocents trapped here! This is not the way to fight them! Please sister!”

But Hela snarled, yanking herself from his grip. Loki cried out as a huge beam dropped down from the ceiling, smashing into embers as the fire worsened, catching the other embers in the ceiling. The smoke thickened, and as Loki tried to cover his mouth to cough, Hela darted away, further into the theater. Loki stumbled to his feet to go after her, but a hand on his shoulder pulled him away.

“Come on, we’ve got to go!” Someone shouted at him. Through the haze, he registered that it was Valkyrie. He opened his mouth to try and explain that Hela had run further inside, but all that came out was hacking coughs. Valkyrie, too, was coughing, but she scooped Loki into her arms and ran with him as another beam fell from the ceiling, nearly blocking their path. Shouts from outside the theater urged her on, and Valkyrie leapt over the burning embers as the whole building groaned. Loki pressed his eyes shut when a wall of flames burst up behind them, and the heat singed at his hair and eyebrows. For a long moment, he felt as though he was melting under the scorching heat, but then just as suddenly they burst out into the cool night air. The smoke was thick here as well, and it coated Loki’s lungs and made him wheeze, but his eyes flew open when he felt arms enclosed around him.

“Brother,” a deep voice, nearly unrecognizable due to the tears in it, murmured against him, and Loki opened his eyes to see Thor cradling him close. Slowly, Loki returned the hug, surprised by the warmth it brought as Thor murmured, “Loki, I thought I had lost you... Brother, I thought I’d lost you...”

“I’m here,” Loki murmured softly. “No I... I’m here.”

He flinched when the building behind them groaned one last time, before the whole thing fell in on itself in a bursting of heat and smoke, sparks flying from it as firefighters worked to contain the

blaze. Tony rushed up a moment later, pressing a kiss to Loki's hair and expressing similar sentiments to his old friend.

Loki, though, simply felt numb as he watched the once beautiful Ragnarok Theater crumbling in on itself.

"Our sister, Thor," Loki whispered. "She didn't make it out. She... she was still in there. She... She wouldn't leave with me. I tried, Thor, I tried to make her leave! I wanted to save her, Thor, I tried!"

"I... I'm sorry, little brother," Thor murmured, gazing quietly at the crackling blaze. "I'm sorry Loki. I... Perhaps we could have known each other, gotten along, if things had been different. If father had been different."

"Perhaps," Loki whispered, sniffing. "She was so consumed by hate. But... I think she just... I don't know, Thor, but I didn't want her to die. I... I wanted to save her. I'm sorry, I'm sorry I just wanted to save her."

"Hush, Loki, I know," Thor whispered, holding him close again. "I know brother. I know."

Ambulances rode up, the horses frightened by the fire as people were loaded into the wagons. Firefighters fought hard, and the roaring blaze faded into smouldering embers. Off to the side, Clint, Natasha, and Steve's contact, a Director Fury, worked together to load a large, unconscious prisoner into another barred in wagon. Loki opened his eyes long enough to spot them, and through his aching chest he felt an odd sense of satisfaction at seeing Thanos being taken away. Today might go down as either a victory or a tragedy, but it was both to Loki.

"I'm so glad you're safe," Tony murmured, pressing another kiss into Loki's hair, and the omega turned to kiss him back, but the touch felt hollow as he gazed at the simmering building and thought about what and who he'd lost inside.

Chapter End Notes

I've written ahead and I'm actually almost done with this fic, just like two more chapters on my end to write. This has been a long run, but it's exciting come to and end and closing everything up. As always I look forward to any comments you might have and thanks again to lokislonleyleady for being a loyal beta through this whole long story! Hope you all have a good day!

Karma

It starts with one snowball

Then you watch the dominoes fall

You carried on and on

Without a doubt, doubt, doubt

So vicious, this cycle

When you live in sweet denial

But, you'll be sorry when you're coming down, down, down

And when your world comes crashing down (It won't save you)

All of the money in this town (It won't save you)

Messy things rarely clean up themselves, and such was the way with the following hours. Loki had hoped, for a moment, that he would be able to mourn in peace with his lover and his brother while they all rode off to claim the deed to Odin Manor and free Peter, but such dreams never seem to go smoothly. At least in this case, those hopes were stamped out when a high pitched cry of relief shot through the night, and arms tugged Loki away from Tony, who let out an indignant huff.

“Darling!” Gast giggled as he pulled Loki into a deep kiss, Tony’s friends blinking at the scene with expressions ranging from surprise to disgust. Loki frowned and pressed his hands to Gast’s chest, wiggling from his arms as the alpha went on to declare, “I was so worried about you, my dear! Oh, I did not know if you would survive all that awfulness. Oh, hello Stark, love. What an awful thing that was, hm? Who are all these people, by the way?”

“These people,” Tony spat. “Are my friends. And you, on the other hand, are not. In other words, goodbye.”

“Well!” Gast huffed, wrapping an arm around Loki’s waist. “The nerve of some people! Come, darling, let’s get away from here!”

“You left me,” Loki spat, wiggling from Gast’s arms. “You just left me in there!”

“Well... I knew you’d get out, somehow,” Gast blinked. “Anyway that is unimportant.”

“Unimportant?” Loki cried. “You left me to die!”

“Well that would have been most unfortunate,” Gast agreed. “But you didn’t, so let’s move on, hm? Such messy business, all of this.”

“Hey,” Tony stepped forward again, eyes flashing. “Let him go.”

“Let him go?” Gast shrieked. “I’ll have you know this is my omega! Come, darling, these people are clearly delusional.”

“You’re delusional!” Tony spat. “Look around you! Your theater is ruined, do you not care at all?”

“Hm, oh that? Oh, minor inconveniences. The theater and the omegas can be replaced. I’m sure the police are already on the case! And there’s always more money where that all came from, hm Stevie? Especially now I heard the Mrs is out of the way... Jail, wasn’t it?” Gast chuckled as if it was all a great joke, and Steve clenched his jaw.

“Now see here!” Tony cried, but Loki held up a hand and cleared his throat.

“Tony,” Loki murmured, wrapping his arm around Gast’s waist. “You go ensure Peter is alright, yes? Help Thor? I’d best go with my alpha, alright?”

“But Loki-“

“We need to be on our way,” Loki insisted, fluttering his eyelashes at Gast and pressing a kiss to his cheek as he murmured, “Come, my love. Let us retire home and we can see all about replacing things, hm?”

“You don’t need to worry your pretty little head about any of that!” Gast chuckled, pulling Loki away from the group, but the omega simply giggled.

“Silly, I always help you with everything you need, don’t I love?” Loki beamed. He turned to press one last kiss against Gast’s earlobe, but as he looked back he cast a wink at Tony. The alpha frowned, watching as the two of them marched into a carriage and rode away into the night.

“Well,” Tony blinked. “What do you make of that?”

“I think,” Steve murmured. “That Gast doesn’t understand that Thanos is captured and Hela is dead. I think Loki has a plan to keep it that way for a while longer.”

“And why does he have to go with him?” Thor demanded, shivering slightly.

“Gast will flee the country the moment he thinks things have turned south, and we don’t know how many smuggled omegas he might take with him,” Steve murmured. “Come on, we need to contact Fury.”

“We, meaning...”

“I will, with... With Sam, sound okay?” Steve glanced around.

“I’m ready,” Sam nodded.

“Good,” Tony chuckled. “Because I think Thor and I have business at Odin Manor.”

“Of course you do,” Steve smiled, squeezing Tony’s arm. “Go get the kid. But Tony? Be ready in case I send someone for you, got it?”

“Will do,” Tony nodded. “I just hope Loki knows what he’s doing and doesn’t end up fleeing the country with Glamorous Gast.”

“Loki wouldn’t do that,” Thor declared confidently, before quickly backtracking and adding, “Well, he wouldn’t have before. I’m afraid I hardly recognize my brother now... What happened to him? I suppose in the past two years much has changed while I was caring for my father...”

“It has,” Tony admitted. “But you’ll be caught up to speed. Modernism has taken over. We have flying machines and omegas are just beginning to fight for rights. You’ll find it is a different world out here, but it is getting to be a better world.”

“It sounds like it is,” Thor broke into a weak smile. He turned back to his old shipmates, who blinked at him, and he smiled adding, “Don’t worry, my friends. You should return to your boat to keep it safe for the night, but I shall not forget about you. If I do not visit tomorrow, I will the next day. Do not fret.”

“We don’t care if you visit,” Rocket shrugged. “But I mean, if you do, we wouldn’t mind.”

“Please visit,” Mantis spoke. “We do care!”

“Thank you, my friends,” Thor smiled, before clapping Tony on the back and declaring, “Lead the way!”

“You mind if we come?” Rhodey suddenly spoke up with a weak chuckle, Bruce standing by his side. “It’s just, we don’t have a ride...”

“Sorry, no more room,” Tony joked, before breaking into a grin and clapping Rhodey on the back as he nodded and lead the way to the automobile.

“So,” Tony spoke up as they approached it. “Who has the deed, anyway? How do we actually, you know, officially get the house?”

“Ah, well, Loki would be much better to ask about that,” Thor replied, hesitating. “To be quite honest, I do not know...”

“But luckily,” a woman’s voice spoke up. “I do.”

“Valkyrie!” Thor beamed, clapping the alpha on the back. “It is good to see you safe!”

“Yes, well, it is good to be safe,” Valkyrie nodded. “And it would be even better to get out of this cold air... Especially since I know about the deed.”

“Come on then,” Tony chuckled. “Anyone else and we really will run out of room.”

“So,” Thor spoke. “Where is the deed? How do we get it?”

“Muninn,” Valkyrie explained. “He was the official keeper of the will. I know Hela wanted to keep on Odin’s old servants, partly out of spite, and I believe he will still have the will. I never liked them much, but honestly I think they’ll be glad she’s gone. She never liked them either... Anyway, I saw Loki take off with the Grandmaster, is he still insisting on making love until he’s blue in the face?”

“That is my brother that you are speaking of!” Thor frowned.

“Oh, sorry,” she shrugged, without sounding very sorry at all, and the car fell into an awkward silence before Tony cleared his throat.

“I think you haven’t really met the new Loki,” Tony finally spoke.

“New Loki?” She asked. “What happened to the old Loki?”

“It’s just... There’s a lot that has happened, and a lot that very few people know,” Tony explained. “But maybe I’ll let Loki explain it to you when it’s all over. For now, how about you tell us about being on the ocean, hm Thor?”

“Oh, I had the grandest time!” Thor beamed, and Tony chuckled as he drove along and listened to Thor’s awestruck tales.

It was funny how Gast's mansion looked like nothing had changed, but Loki knew better. Still, he allowed the Grandmaster to carry him over the threshold and then plop him down on the couch inside.

"Well, it was quite a night, wasn't it sweetie?" Gast hummed, pulling Loki into his lap. "But you don't need to worry yourself, these things always sort themselves out."

"Darling," Loki sighed softly, pushing Gast away. The alpha frowned, unused to Loki's real voice, and he blinked in surprise at the omega. Loki simply sighed and shifted, debating his next moves carefully before he spoke. "Did you ever regret any of this?"

"Lo-Lo, are you quite alright?" Gast blinked, frowning slightly. "You seem... off tonight, love. Come on, let's do something fun and get your mind off that nasty fire!"

"I don't feel like it tonight," Loki admitted, pushing Gast away. The denial was so shocking to the alpha that he didn't fight it, but instead sat back and stared.

"I want to know," Loki went on. "If you regretted any of this. Buying and selling omegas, creating an empire of... of slaves, really. Do you ever lay awake at night and regret it? Think that perhaps... perhaps you could have done something else?"

"Something else?" Gast asked, chuckling. "What in heaven's name are you talking about, darling? You're acting very odd! Anyway, what would I have to regret? Slaves is such a... a nasty word! I don't buy and sell slaves, I buy and sell omegas! There isn't anything wrong with that, really. They're just omegas! Except you of course, sweetheart. You're different."

"And why am I different?" Loki insisted. "What always made me different to you? You've lusted after me since we met years ago! I always thought you'd move on, but you never did... You always wanted me while you tossed others aside. Why?"

"Why? Well... Well, darling, you're my omega. Of course I wouldn't toss you aside!" Gast chuckled. "You're mine."

"And before I was your omega?" Loki pressed. "Why did you want me for so many years?"

"Well... Because I... Loki, you're being so odd!"

"Tell me," Loki pressed. "I want to know."

"Well, I suppose, uh, I loved you, darling," Gast finally shrugged. "You were always very alluring and all of that, and you never got boring! You didn't fight me or become an annoyance, you've always treated me well! Darling, I remember how my father used to talk about omegas. Son, he'd say, all omegas are the same. They all want the same things, and they're endlessly hard to keep happy! He always told me that all they're good for is giving you babies, but see I never agreed with that! Oh yes, some omegas are quite the same, but I've always seen there is much more good to them. And you, my love, you've never been like any other omega. You've always been different, exciting! I've loved you since I met you."

"And you never thought that maybe... that maybe the other omegas wouldn't want to do as you told them?" Loki murmured. "You never thought maybe... maybe all of it was wrong?"

"Wrong?" Gast laughed. "What about it would be wrong? I always wanted to be better than my father. When I bought my first omega I offered her a job as a dancer! She accepted it happily, and

so I learned omegas like dancing! That's why I opened my club, my stage, to give omegas jobs! They are silly things, and don't always seem to appreciate the help I give them. But without me, where would they be? On the streets, that's where they'd be. And so they are happy dancing and getting fucked as they like to be, and I get money to get more! We all come out ahead, don't you see? So why should I regret a thing? That's funny, is someone at the door?"

"It sounds like there is," Loki sighed softly. "I can answer it."

"Oh, no need darling. Topaz! Topaz? Where is that beta? Oh, alright, perhaps I will have to get it," Gast hummed as he stood, flouncing off to the door. Loki sighed softly, pressing a hand against his bonding gland just under his collar. He didn't know why this felt hard, suddenly. He'd been eager to escape Gast before, and he still despised him, and he had the overwhelming urge to rush off and apologize, to save him from what he knew would be coming. But Loki squashed the urge to think of the memories of the ways he'd suffered over the past two years, the disregard Gast truly had for him, no matter what words he used now.

There was a soft commotion at the door, and Loki sat up, frowning slightly. Creeping closer, he heard Gast arguing with whoever was on the other side, which was a man dressed in uniform.

"I can't go off and fight in some, what was it? A war!" Gast declared. "Ridiculous, on your way!"

"You've been summoned," the man in uniform repeated. "And I am to take you."

"Now?"

"Yes, now," the man in uniform nodded.

"But... this is absurd!" Gast shook his head. "You cannot truly be serious."

"We are deadly serious," a deeper voice spoke up. "Unless, of course, you'd like to go to prison?"

"Prison?" Gast huffed. "I simply cannot go to prison. You know I have a very good barrister."

"Well then, it sounds like you are going to war!" The deeper voice declared. "Say goodbye, if you'd like."

"To war?" Loki murmured, stepping out of the shadows to look between the man in uniform and a well dressed man just behind him on the steps. "He's going to war?"

"Yes, down in Africa," the man behind him explained with a soft chuckle. "It's all about, you know, them fighting for their independence and us taking it from them. Don't worry, I'm sure it's right up your ally."

"Well I never!" Gast cried, turning helplessly back to Loki, who swallowed a soft noise and stepped forward.

"To war, then," he murmured. "Darling I... I suppose you'll need to go now."

"Well this is utterly ridiculous!" Gast cried, throwing his hands in the air. "Don't worry, my love, I'm sure I won't be gone long. They'll get me out of there in no time."

"Who will get you out?" The man on the steps raised his eyebrows.

"Oh... some friends of mine, I'm sure you don't know them," he huffed, and the man on the steps chuckled.

"I'm sure," he nodded. "Go on, there's an auto waiting for you."

"Darling," Loki murmured suddenly, stepping up to Gast, who blinked. "I... I'm sorry."

"Whatever for?" Gast laughed. "Don't worry, I'll be home by the end of the week. This is all ridiculous nonsense. Don't fret, just, uh, tell Topaz to look after things, hm? Well, off I go, I suppose!"

"Indeed," the man on the steps nodded once. "Off you go."

Loki watched silently as Gast was paraded away by the alpha in uniform, and he sighed deeply as he turned to the man still standing by the steps.

"You're Director Fury, if I'm not mistaken?" Loki murmured.

"You are a clever spy," Fury smirked. "Oh, don't look so surprised! I know all about you. Bucky told me everything. Oh, you look surprised again! Yes, don't worry about Bucky, he's working for me. He'll be out of prison very soon, but that was a clever diversion, was it not? Don't worry, you're not getting sent off anywhere."

"The war in Africa," Loki spoke. "I was under the impression there was no conscription."

"And I'm under the impression that it's rather chaotic at the moment. People go missing all the time. Not many come home," Fury replied.

"I see," Loki nodded tightly. "And why war instead of prison?"

"Gast has connections everywhere in England, but they don't stretch down to Africa," Fury replied. "He would slip right through our fingers if we kept him here. He won't have such luck in the army."

"I see," Loki nodded once again. "And Thanos?"

"Undecided, but I have truly trusted people watching him at the moment. We don't know yet what will become of him, but you can rest assured that he will not be out here with the rest of us," Fury replied. "Now then, are there any documents of interest in here? I think I'll do a quick once over of Gast's office and then we have someplace to be."

"Do we?" Loki blinked.

"Yes, we've got to get some final information from you, and then I believe you'll have an omega eagerly waiting to see you," Fury smiled. "This has been a long road for you, I know, you came through. In fact, you've passed with flying colors. I was doubtful when Bucky brought you up to me some two years ago, but I think you've made it through probation. How would you like a job?"

"A job?" Loki blinked.

"Yes," Fury smiled. "They were formerly called the Sword and Shield Theater Troupe, but we recently hit a few... snags, and I think we're going to be looking for a new title. Anyway, you already know two of the members. Clint and Natasha? Yes, they're a part of it. It's a leading group of actors who are rather good at espionage. I think you might fit right in. You need some time to think it over?"

"Honestly, Director, I think I'll need very little time," Loki chuckled softly. "But then you probably already know that."

“Of course I do,” Fury grinned. “Well, shall we be off?”

“What will become of all this? Of Gast’s home and legacy?” Loki paused.

“You mean what didn’t burn down tonight?” Fury smirked. “Well, I suppose as his omega it will all go to you.”

“Really?” Loki’s lips slowly curled up in a smile. “You know I rather like the sound of that.”

“And what will you do with it, if I can ask?”

“Well, before I probably would’ve bought cosmetics and thrown a lot of parties. Now, though, I think a certain omega would skewer me if I did that. Perhaps it can be sold off and the profit can be used for science, or perhaps it can go to omega rights... I’ll have to think about it. Anyway, I’m ready to go. In another life I would’ve been thrilled, but now I’m overly eager to see that omega you spoke of. Come along.”

Fury chuckled, shaking his head, but he took Loki’s arm and led him to a waiting auto which drove them into the night.

Soft to be Strong

Chapter Notes

I'm so sorry I disappeared for so long. Life has been super hectic but I hope to be more regular with my updates until this whole story is posted :)

I know it's hard to be soft

I know it hurts to be kind

I know that when love is lost

It's only fear in disguise

And I guess I've known it all along

The truth is you have to be soft to be strong

Finally, I feel the fear is gone

I found out love has to be soft to be strong

Soft to be strong

And so, one could say that things were finally going right for the world. That night, after the fire, Tony found Peter curled up on Hela's couch with a collar around his neck and his eyes pressed shut against fresh tear tracks down his cheeks. The moment he heard the floor creak, though, the boy's eyes flew open, and he burst into a wide smile.

"Thank God you're alright," Tony dashed over, pulling Peter into his arms for a hug. The omega relaxed there, smiling warmly when Tony finally let him go and mussed his hair.

"You're here! What happened?" Peter demanded softly. "Is everyone okay? Where's Loki? Where's Hela?"

"The Odin Estate has a new master now," Tony murmured. "Assuming Thor will take his place. He seems rather attached to the ocean. Hela... The explosions still occurred, but we managed to evacuate everyone else. She refused to leave... But kid, you're free now. Thor is downstairs getting things with the will all sorted, he's going to burn your contract. Loki will be on his way before too long, I suspect. I believe he had some unfinished business with Gast."

"So... she didn't make it?" Peter murmured, a bit numb as Tony fiddled with his collar and slipped it off him. "I am sorry. She... no one deserves to die like that. She wasn't truly bad, I suppose, even if I didn't like her..."

"You're a good person Peter," Tony smiled, ruffling his hair once more before slipping out of his own coat to wrap it around the boy's small frame. "Come on, let's get you out of here. It's chilly tonight."

“So Thor will be the Lord of Odin Manor?” Peter murmured, accepting the coat. He looked around the room, remembering how, long ago, he’d knelt beside Loki on a pillow as the other omega flipped through a thick book and pretended to be better than everyone. It felt like another lifetime, one that had been long forgotten.

“We shall see,” Tony nodded, reaching to squeeze Peter’s shoulder. Downstairs, Peter spotted Thor and an alpha woman he didn’t know talking with Muninn, who was in his nightclothes and appeared rather distraught at having been woken. Peter smiled when he spotted Thor, and the alpha beamed right back, turning away from the servant to march over to Peter and gaze down at the boy.

“It is good to see you, Peter,” Thor murmured, studying the omega carefully before he bowed slightly. “It has been some time since I last saw you in my father’s manor... In my manor, I suppose. You know, Tony, I always looked forward to the day I would inherit this old place, but now that day has come, and it isn’t so grand a prospect as I had always imagined. In fact it all seems rather lonely, now, without Loki or father or mother, without the parties we used to throw... It feels father large, rather empty. Rather... quiet.”

“Well you can throw as many parties as you like here, now,” Valkyrie grinned, marching over to eye Peter before she declared, “Hey there, kid. You must be the servant that isn’t a servant anymore that Thor told me so much about on the way here.”

“Oh?” Peter glanced at Thor curiously.

“Yup,” Valkyrie grinned. “If I didn’t know any better, I’d say Thor was sweet on you back in the day.”

“I was not,” Thor frowned.

“Inviting an omega servant to tea?” Valkyrie rolled her eyes. “Really now.”

“Well, I hope you aren’t anymore,” Peter chuckled softly. “Because I’m afraid alphas are not my cup of tea...”

“A boy after my own heart,” Valkyrie grinned. “You tell him.”

“Well I wasn’t anyway,” Thor crossed his arms. “Father was to arrange for my omega, he even spoke with Miss Jane of Westminster’s father. They were making arrangements, he just never got the chance to finish them.”

For a moment it was silent, and Peter shivered as he gazed about the dark, quiet hall, and for a moment he was almost sad. When he’d first come here, he’d found the atmosphere repressive and harsh, but the manor felt empty now without that sparkle of superiority. It felt like there were ghosts from the past in the house. They had entered a new century, one where this manor didn’t belong, and for only a moment Peter almost missed the way things had been. But then the moment passed and he pushed the thought away, snuggling more securely into Tony’s jacket.

“I’m not certain I will stay here tonight,” Thor suddenly spoke. “Perhaps there is lodging at Stark Manor?”

“Of course!” Tony nodded. “My door will always be open to you.”

“I know Jane!” Valkyrie suddenly spoke. “I worked security for her briefly. She’s a very tender lover, I can assure you.”

Thor flushed red and cleared his throat, and Tony chuckled, clapping him on the shoulder as he led

them from the manor, the thick, old door falling shut behind them.

“What do you suppose you’ll do next?” Tony murmured as they made their way to the auto. “Will you move back in here?”

“I... Somehow I’m not certain I will,” Thor admitted softly, gazing up at the towers stretching tall into the night’s sky, dark against the stars. “I thought I wanted the life of a lord, but I’ve tasted the sea and it’s like a storybook mother read to me as a boy. Do you think mother would be angry if I went to sea?”

“I don’t think so,” Peter spoke up quietly. “She always seemed so nice, as if she wanted you and Loki to be happy. I think she’d want you to do whatever you wanted most.”

“So what shall I do with the manor?” Thor murmured softly. “And what of the people in the village? They’ve always had us to look after them.”

“I think you’ll find there’s villages all across England that are surviving without lords to look after them,” Valkyrie replied. “The old ways are going, some say Parliament will even become more powerful than the royals.”

“Perhaps Loki will want it,” Thor’s face broke into a grin. “He always did want to be the lord of the manor, I think! Yes, he shall have it!”

Peter didn’t say anything, but somehow he wasn’t sure Loki would want it either. So much had changed, Loki was like a new person, and Peter had an inching suspicion Odin Manor would be put to some better use than it had seen in all its years.

That night, Peter curled up on the couch by Tony’s side in front of the fire, designs of grand inventions stretched all across their laps. Tony was working on creating a helium balloon, while Peter was working towards a new sort of electric light. It felt almost like old times, sitting there together and talking about the future, but Peter pushed his papers aside and turned to gaze up at Tony.

“Do you think you’ll marry Loki?” Peter finally asked. “It’s funny, for a short while I thought Loki and I were competing for your affection, but it seems that now we may be competing for Loki.”

“Funny how that goes,” Tony chuckled. “Loki has always been excellent at making himself the center of attention. Well, I rather think Loki is going to ask me, actually.”

“I see,” Peter murmured. “And I suppose that’s how it was always meant to be. You’ve been engaged for something like five years now, haven’t you... I suppose nobles are meant to be married, in the end. When it comes down to it, I suppose I’ll never be quite like either of you.”

“Peter,” Tony frowned, turning more fully to face him. “You’re every bit as important as the both of us. You know I don’t believe in titles or nobility.”

“Yes, but I’m simply saying that... that logicistally your marriage makes sense. I... I’ve loved my life here but... But sometimes I wonder if Loki simply loved you all along. Perhaps I’ll be needed overseas. Wasn’t America working on some big project they wanted me for?”

“Peter, you’re not thinking of leaving, are you?” Tony paled.

“Well... I don’t want to get in the way of you both.”

“Peter,” Tony frowned, placing his hand on the omega’s. “Didn’t you learn your lesson when Loki

left? I know it isn't conventional, but I think Loki loves you as well."

"He can't possibly love us both," Peter murmured. "Not truly."

"And why's that?"

"Well... because it isn't done," Peter replied.

"Nor do people have wings, and yet we've learned to fly," Tony replied softly. "Loki loves you so dearly, Peter. If you left you'd break his heart."

"So what then?" Peter murmured. "We can't truly both love him, can we?"

"I think that is for Loki to decide, don't you?" Tony murmured. "And whatever happens, we'll be brothers in arms. Deal?"

"Deal," Peter broke into a smile. "Thank you for always being so good to me."

"Only because you've always been so good to me," Tony chuckled. "You're the smartest omega I know, except maybe Loki. I could tell the moment I met you that you'd do great things, and you've never disappointed me."

"And when you marry Loki, if you do, what will I be?" Peter murmured. "I don't like the idea of being anyone's dirty secret."

"Secret? No. Dirty? Maybe," Tony grinned, laughing softly. "Don't worry, Pete. It'll work out somehow. You'll see."

They fell asleep there on the couch, close enough to touch, and Peter dreamed about what could have been, and what was still to come.

Loki arrived the next morning in a carriage with Steve and Bucky, and the moment he spotted Peter he dashed forward to sweep the boy into his arms and press a long kiss to his lips. Peter moaned softly into the kiss, his fingers tangling in Loki's dark curls, kissing him until they were both dizzy from lack of air. Tony settled for a kiss against Loki's knuckles, though the omega smirked down at him as he knelt, reaching to tuck some hair behind his ear.

"You're back!" Peter beamed when he spotted Bucky, and the omega nodded, even as another member inside the carriage cleared his throat and stepped out.

"Indeed," T'Challa smiled, bowing his head to Peter. "He is."

"My Lord," Peter bowed quickly, and T'Challa chuckled, shaking his head.

"Please," he smiled. "That isn't necessary, Peter. It seems I owe you all an apology. I was informed this morning that new evidence came in, true evidence this time. It seems it was Hydra that actually murdered my father. I'm sorry, Omega Barnes, that I never believed you, or anyone of your friends."

"You were led to believe what they wanted you to believe," Bucky replied gently.

"But that's all over, now," Steve spoke. "Did you hear? Thanos is in prison, and he's being sent to America for holding. He had just as many crimes there as here, but without as many connections. He'll be secure there. It seems we've convinced Parliament to discuss a new omega protection act, as well. They're thinking of outlawing the buying and selling of omegas."

“Really?” Peter’s jaw dropped in awe.

“I am going to support the cause with all my efforts,” T’Challa nodded. “It may be some time before the public is won over, but I am already working on arrangements for London to become a safe haven for all omegas, regardless of status.”

“And I will be opening a new school for omegas,” Loki spoke up.

“Oh, a finishing school?” Peter blinked.

“Not exactly,” Loki chuckled. “I’m looking for an English teacher, an arithmetic teacher, geography, politics, economics, science... you know, all the usual. It would be lovely to have some scientific guest speakers now and then...”

“Truly you are?” Peter’s jaw dropped. “That’s... amazing! But where?”

“Perhaps in Gast Manor, I believe I will be gaining control of it rather soon. Gast has gone away to war, and... I’ve been informed he may not be coming back,” Loki admitted. “I certainly don’t want to live there...”

“Oh, I’m sorry to hear that,” Tony murmured stiffly. “It must be hard, losing your alpha.”

“Perhaps it should be harder,” Loki replied softly. “I know it’s wrong, but I feel sort of... relieved.”

“Well... Gast’s manor not the only one,” Tony cleared his throat. “I don’t think Thor wants Odin Manor, either.”

“Really?” Loki blinked. “But he’s looked forward to being Lord Odin for years...”

“And now he’s found the sea,” Tony replied. “I believe he intends to give it to you.”

“Well,” Loki blinked. “I’ve gone from inheriting nothing to inheriting everything, it seems.”

“I have an idea for Odin Manor,” Peter spoke up. “If... If you wanted you could turn it into a hospital with guaranteed good practices for omegas. Because, see, T’Challa once mentioned to me that omegas aren’t always treated as kindly as alphas by doctors.”

“Well,” Loki blinked, thinking back to the psychiatric hospital that he’d visited only briefly before Thanos started making home visits. There were some omegas in that hospital that truly needed help, even Loki had initially hoped a doctor might help him with his frequent gloomy times before his heats, until he learned what practices there were really liked and that all omegas there were abused heavily. He smiled at the thought that he could create a hospital where practices truly were humane, and he turned to Tony excitedly.

“Do you think Bruce would be willing to help with the project?” He asked. “We could have several wings, even a wing for psychiatry! Can you imagine if we could create a facility where we employed good doctors, a facility where omegas were treated like alphas?”

“I think it’s a brilliant idea,” Tony smiled warmly. “I suspect Thor would support you fully, and you know Shuri is brilliant at science and medicine. If you encouraged her, I think she could become a leading physician.”

“My little sister, a physician?” T’Challa smiled. “I think that’s a brilliant idea.”

“You’re right,” Loki beamed. “And I’m sure there’s more, even if we employ from overseas. And

perhaps we could even have a mentorship program. Can you imagine the day there is the first omega doctor?"

"You can make it happen, Loki," Tony smiled. "I know you can make great things happen, when you put your mind to it. I know a man, Dr Strange, who I think would also be willing to assist you and Bruce. Stephen is a leader in new medical technologies, including anesthesia, and he developed the first anesthesia that can be safely used on omegas. I believe he would be more than happy to help with the development of a new hospital."

"That would be excellent," Loki smiled, reaching to take both Tony's and Peter's arms. "I can begin work on these plans very soon, but for now I think we have somewhere to be. Come, I was thinking we could go down by the river. Perhaps we can take a picnic lunch?"

"It's always been my favorite place," Tony murmured. "I'll have Jarvis make it."

"Thank you, my love," Loki smiled, pressing a kiss to Tony's cheek, and the alpha's jaw dropped. The others in the room chuckled softly, dispersing into the sitting room to talk politics while Loki, Tony, and Peter gathering supplies for their picnic. Within the hour, they were bumping down the country lane in Tony's auto, Peter chattering excitedly behind the wheel.

"And so," he declared. "I thought maybe I really could write a book like Verne did, and I'm nearly halfway through! I'm writing under an alpha name, since I'm certain no one would public a scientific book written by an omega, but Tony's read it and he likes it."

"And I look forward to reading it as well," Loki smiled, smoothing a ruffle on Peter's coat. "I'm sure it'll be wonderful."

"Yes! It's about a boy who is very good at chemistry and finds a way to walk up walls," Peter explained. "It's both scientific, and an adventure. I'm thinking if titling it *The Spider Man*."

"Well," Loki chuckled. "I'm not certain people will want to read about Spiders, but then there has been a sort of macabre fascination sweeping through England for the past years. I think it'll be brilliant. Ah, here we are! It's amazing, isn't it, how this spot has never changed."

He got out of the auto slowly, taking off his shoes so his toes could sink into the soft grass under the tree beside the stream, and Tony smiled, spreading the blanket out on the grass.

"It's been like this since we were children," he murmured. "And I hope is like this for the time to come. Do you remember how Thor used to jump in the water and come home all wet? Your father was never angry exactly, just mildly amused."

"He was angry when I did it once," Loki huffed.

"I think he was in shock," Tony grinned. "And remember when you used to pick flowers and I'd turn them into a little chain and we'd wear them around our wrists and fingers. I sometimes pretended they were wedding rings... It's stupid, I know."

"No it's not," Loki murmured, studying Tony closely. "It isn't at all. I'm sorry that I acted as I did when you proposed to me. I suppose I've always had lots of pride, and there is nothing wrong with that, but I placed my pride before your feelings..."

"I should never have acted as I did, chasing after omega girls when I was meant to be marrying you," Tony murmured. "I'm sorry."

"But now," Loki went on. "We can talk about it like proper adults, and that makes me so happy. I

think we both had a lot of growing up to do, but I've been married once now and I learned that pride is not the way to a happy marriage. I'm not going to say pride is a bad thing, but there needs to be a softness in love that I don't think I quite understood before. I think I've learned that being soft isn't a bad thing. There is a strength in being able to show a softer side of you to the people you trust."

Peter smiled, lacing his fingers between Loki's and pressing a kiss to Loki's cheek.

"I love you so much," Peter murmured. "You've grown, aged, it looks good on you."

"Thank you Peter," Loki chuckled softly. "I don't know what I'd do without you. But now then, I've been thinking about this for a long time... I'm going to need you both to close our eyes."

"What?" Tony chuckled. "You going to run away while our eyes are closed?"

"Hm, you'll see," Loki winked. "Go on you two."

Peter pressed his eyes shut, listening as he heard a rustling from somewhere, and when he opened his eyes his jaw dropped. There, nestled in the picnic blanket, were three rings that clipped together just so to make a heart. The first ring had a sparkling green gem in it, the second had a glistening red one, and the third had a brilliant blue gem. Loki smiled warmly, unclipping them and handing the red to Tony and the blue to Peter.

"For you," he murmured.

"What... what is this?" Tony blinked, and Loki chuckled, moving to slide it up his finger.

"You were taking much too long to truly ask me," Loki replied. "And I got tired of waiting, so it's time I ask you. Tony, my love, Peter, will you marry me?"

The two sat in the grass for a long moment, before Peter's jaw dropped and he declared, "Both of us?"

"Well yes," Loki blinked. "I can't very well choose just one of you, I don't think..."

"But... omegas can't marry omegas," Peter pointed out timidly. "And anyway you can't marry two different people. It isn't done."

"And here I thought I was the one who followed protocol," Loki teased gently. "Listen, sea captains can marry people off, yes? So I was thinking that we could go aboard Thor's boat and talk to his captain, that Peter Quill person. We can go out to sea where there are no laws and no countries and we can be married how we like. How does that sound?"

"But Loki," Peter murmured, still concerned. "Will people know? What will they say?"

"Why does anyone have to know?" Loki blinked. "About any of it?"

"But... somehow I always thought you were excited to be Omega Stark," Peter murmured. "That you'd be proud of it."

"I think I shall remain Omega Freyrdottir," Loki replied.

"Your mother's last name?" Tony blinked. "But--"

"I would rather go by it than my father's last name," Loki replied firmly. "And I can choose for myself, thank you."

“And so what,” Tony asked. “All of our marriage will be secret? Yours and mine as well?”

“Yes,” Loki nodded. “Do you mind terribly?”

“Well... No, I’m just surprised,” Tony blinked, glancing to Peter.

“Anyway,” Loki went on. “I’ll need to appear single for my new job.”

“New job?” Peter’s jaw dropped. “I thought you were starting a school, and a hospital?”

“Those are side projects, my dear,” Loki smiled. “Truly I am working for the government, I got it all sorted out last night but I’m returning soon to finalize the paperwork and whatnot. I don’t think I’m meant to tell anyone what I’m doing, but I shall tell you that from appearances I will be working with Clint and Natasha at their theater group.”

“You’ll be on stage?” Tony blinked.

“Yes,” Loki smiled. “I’m told I must start preparing for the next show. I will be playing an omega child in King Lear, and if I do well I’m told I might have the chance to audition for Hamlet.”

“Oh, Loki,” Peter moved to hug him, burying his head against Loki’s neck. “Love, can you imagine? Playing Hamlet?”

“Yes,” Loki smiled. “Actually I can.”

“But you’ll be working for the government?” Tony pressed. “Doing what?”

“I’m afraid I can’t tell you exactly,” Loki admitted. “But we are getting married so perhaps I can say that I’m joining the British Intelligence. It seems I’ve made a name for myself as a spy.”

“Well,” Tony chuckled softly. “I’ll be damned.”

“If you keep using language like that you will,” Loki teased, laughing softly as Tony grinned and tickled at his side. Peter joined in, and the three of them laughed, rolling around until their blanket was mussed and there were grass stains across Loki’s elbows. Finally they collapsed against each other, Tony’s head on Loki’s chest and Peter curled up by Loki’s side.

“So,” Tony murmured. “This is what happiness feels like.”

“Yes,” Loki whispered as he ran his fingers through Tony’s hair. “I rather think it is.”

“It is,” Peter murmured. “And I’ve missed it so much.”

And I made myself believe

Other people wanted to hurt me

I took my bitterness and made it sweet

I took a broken heart and made it beat

And I guess I've known it all along

The truth is you have to be soft to be strong

Finally, I feel the fear is gone

I found out love has to be soft to be strong

Soft to be strong

Superstar

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Before I met you, I pushed them all away
Soon as I kissed you, I wanted you to stay
What I like about you is you know who you are
What you like about me is I know what I'm not
I love the way we worked so hard
Yeah, we've come so far
Baby, look at me, you're my superstar
When I'm afraid, when the world's gone dark
Come and save my day, you're my superstar

It was strange, but Loki couldn't help but glance back down at the newspaper clipping again that morning. It had been four years since En Dwi Gast had been declared missing in action, and as many since Loki had felt his bond severed. He'd reported the odd ache in his belly, and Dr Banner had declared that yes, Loki had officially lost his mate. Somehow Loki hadn't expected it to pull at him the way it did. He'd never truly cared for the Grand Master, and yet somehow knowing he wouldn't be coming home still sat strangely with Loki. Perhaps it was simply because the alpha had been a constant in his life for so long, but Loki had a new constant now, and he slipped the clipping away before smiling into the mirror. He'd aged into his sharp looks, and many said he was more stunning now than he'd been even when he was younger. For four years he'd traveled the world, acting as an actor and spy while Peter and Tony finished a world tour of their own as they showed off their new flying machines.

A soft calling of gulls outside made him smile, and he smoothed his long white coat as a soft knock echoed against his door.

"Brother?" Thor called. "Captain Quill has everything set up. Are you ready for me to walk you down the aisle?"

Loki smiled once before he marched over and pulled the door open, chuckling softly when he saw Thor's face.

"Brother," he murmured. "Are you crying?"

"Of course not! But I have waited years for this day, brother. It feels odd that it has finally come," Thor smiled as Loki took his arm, squeezing gently.

"As have I," Loki murmured. "This is my first true wedding, and though for many years I was eager to be wed to Tony, it feels strange now that the day is here. And yet I have never been more eager for something than I am today. Is Peter ready?"

"More than," Thor chuckled. "He can't seem to stop chattering."

“That does sound like Peter,” Loki chuckled softly. The air outside his cabin was clear and cool. The sea was perfectly still all around them, and the sun shone warm against his back. They’d rented a bigger ship for the occasion, and he smiled when he heard Wanda at the piano. She’d been wed to Jarvis some two months ago in a small but beautiful celebration off the coast of Wales. Peter had convinced Tony not to believe in needing servants, but Jarvis and Wanda still lived in a small cottage near Stark Manor and Jarvis still worked for Tony officially, though his activities varied more now. Wanda’s family hadn’t approved of the wedding, but then they rarely approved of anything, and she stated she was much happier without them.

There was a soft chattering in the air, but it quieted down the moment Loki and Thor appeared at the end of the isle. It was neither a large nor small celebration, but something in between filled with friends gathered close on the worn decks of the ship.

There was a moment of relative silence before Wanda began playing the piano again, and Loki couldn’t help but smile as Thor led him to the front of the isle where Quill was standing, fiddling with his podium.

“You’ll do fine,” Loki reassured him softly as Thor sat. “Thank you for this.”

Quill simply offered a half nervous smile as the wedding march began playing on the piano, and then crinkles appeared at the corners of Loki’s eyes a smile split his face despite himself. Peter was dressed from head to toe in soft whites and pinks, while Tony beside him was a sharp contrast in his dark ebony suit. They both looked equally happy, though, as they made their way up the aisle, stopping beside Loki. Peter reached to squeeze his hand and murmur, “You look gorgeous, but you always do.”

“That goes without saying,” Loki smirked, before softly adding. “You do too.”

Tony fiddled with the ring, but allowed himself to be pulled into Quill’s quick speech before Peter stepped aside to allow Tony to say his vows. When he kissed Loki, it was like the world had forgotten to breathe, and when they pulled away, Loki’s fingers tangled in Tony’s thick hair and he murmured, “Finally, our dreams come true.”

“Your dream isn’t over,” Tony chuckled softly. “Turn around, Romeo, you aren’t finished.”

Loki chuckled softly, squeezing the nape of Tony’s neck before he turned to sweep Peter into his arms. From down the aisle, Bucky whistled softly, and Loki rolled his eyes, grinning despite himself.

“May I have the first dance?” Peter raised his eyebrows, and Loki hesitated for a moment before he smirked.

“When did you learn how to dance proper?” Loki questioned.

“Whoever said we’d be dancing proper?” Peter replied. “Come on, there’s wedding cake and I want the first bite.”

Loki chuckled softly as the omega turned to wave at the audience before everyone broke up to make their way towards the buffet table, but Tony held Loki back for a moment, wrapping an arm around his waist.

“Darling,” he murmured. “This isn’t what I envisioned at all for my future, you know? Married to an omega who is married to an omega? Does this make me Peter’s in-law?”

“I think it makes you whatever you’d like to be made,” Loki replied. “I’m not certain the king has

designed such a title.”

“Well, I’m an inventor for a reason,” Tony declared. “And I say we’re in-laws.”

“Then that’s what you are,” Loki replied. “Now come along. I might like to watch my figure, but that doesn’t mean I’m going to hold back from eating cake.”

Tony chuckled, squeezing Loki once more around the waist before they made their way over, the gulls calling softly over head. This wasn’t the wedding Loki had planned as a child when he’d first developed his crush on the alpha next door, but now that he was here he truly couldn’t imagine it another way. This was happiness, this was love.

The new century was well on its way, and in America it was said that many people were beginning to drive around in automobiles like Tony’s. People were beginning to go to air shows where individuals participated in dangerous aerobatics in flying machines, and the world seemed to be moving on from what Loki had known as a child. No longer did people regularly bow when they saw a Lord or Lady, no longer were omegas quite as restrained as they had been less than 10 years before. The world was changing, and Loki knew he was changing with it.

He’d gotten a letter from T’Challa, who was now working as an ambassador in America, telling him that some people were rallying for Thanos to be released from prison. It seemed he’d somehow managed to become some sort of idol for those who feared omegas developing any sort of power. Loki knew he’d never be released, but it was a testament to the fluctuations rushing into the world. Change was frightening, but it was also exciting, and Loki felt more than ready to accept what the world would be bringing.

“For you!” Peter declared as he spooned some chocolate cake into Loki’s mouth, and the elder omega had to hold back an amused, choking cough. He sipped at the champagne Tony offered him and tossed his bouquet into the audience, grinning when Valkyrie caught it and passed it to the omega sitting beside her.

“Brother,” Thor murmured, and Loki turned around with raised eyebrows as he set his drink aside. Thor scuffed at the deck for a moment, before he held out little box tied up with string.

“What’s this?” Loki murmured, tugging at the little ribbon.

“Mother gave it to me,” Thor murmured. “Before she died, she asked me to give it to you on your wedding day. I’ve held onto it for all these years, and now that day has come.”

Loki blinked, gently pulling the top off the box, and then marveling at the little robin's egg blue brooch sitting inside, hanging on a chain.

“She wore this on her wedding day,” Loki murmured. “I remember her telling me.”

He broke off when his fingers brushed across a small paper at the bottom, delicate with age, and he gently opened it.

To my little boy, all grown up . I hope today is one of the happiest in your life. I’m sorry I cannot be there to celebrate it with you in person, but know that I am here in your heart. I have always wished for your happiness, Loki, no matter what that means for you. You’re so smart, and brave, so matter what you may feel today please know that you have a shining future ahead of you. I wish you only the happiest of days, and I will always love you so much. You’ll always be my little boy. Much love, Mother

Loki swallowed hard, his eyes filling with tears, and he did his best to blink them away as he

wrapped his arms around Loki, sniffing softly.

“Thank you,” he whispered. “You don’t know how much this means to me.”

“You don’t know how much you mean to me,” Thor replied gently. “I know I may not have always been the brother you needed, but I will always care for you, Loki. You will always be my little brother, I hope you know that.”

“Hush,” Loki chuckled softly, wiping at his eyes. “You’ll make me cry on my wedding day, and we wouldn’t want that, would we?”

“Of course not,” Thor chuckled, squeezing Loki’s shoulder. “Now run along, I must help with tying off a bit of rigging.”

“My brother, the sailor boy,” Loki chuckled softly. “Who would have known?”

“Indeed,” Thor chuckled. “Who would have?”

That night, Loki found himself curled up in a pillow fort between Tony and Peter, the omega curled up by his side while he gently stroked at Tony’s hair, the alpha’s head in his lap.

“What do you think it’ll be like?” Peter murmured. “I’ve never been to Greece.”

“It’s beautiful, especially the island we’re going to,” Loki murmured. “I met a contact there last year and knew it was where I’d want to spend my honeymoon.”

“It’s hard to imagine you traveling the world as you have,” Tony chuckled, gazing up at Loki. “My superstar.”

“Hardly,” Loki chuckled.

“People love your acting, your singing, they travel from miles around just to see you,” Peter pointed out softly. “You know Fandral came over for tea the other day and was bragging to our guests about having known you before you were famous? It seems the two of you had a beautiful love affair before you were stolen away from him.”

“Is that right?” Loki chuckled. “Some things never change.”

“England has, though,” Tony hummed. “You know they’re talking about giving omegas the right to vote. After Betas gained it, it seems like half of England went into a tizzy.”

“I hope we do,” Peter murmured. “Then maybe some of our policies will actually make sense. Oh! So I was working with Shuri yesterday and we think we have a new method of delivering anesthesia!”

“Must we talk about work now?” Tony groaned softly. “I get enough of that when Bruce comes home jabbering about nothing in particular.”

“The two of you are like an old married couple,” Loki chuckled, massaging at Tony’s scalp.

“I should hope not,” the alpha grinned. “Not when we’re a newly married couple.”

“Can you imagine,” Peter suddenly murmured. “Where we were seven years ago? Just think how far we’ve come.”

“I was probably sitting in my attic, bitter about my father and wishing all manner of

inconveniences upon Thor,” Loki chuckled softly.

“Let’s be honest, I was probably drinking and inventing,” Tony chuckled. “Or in bed with an omega girl... I’m sure she was very pretty, but couldn’t hold a candle to you, my love.”

“Cheeky,” Loki chuckled, pressing a kiss to his forehead. “What about you Peter?”

“Perhaps I was still in school, dreaming about marrying a rich alpha, or perhaps by then I was at your manor, wishing I could be anywhere else,” Peter chuckled softly. “Aunt May is rather stricken with that one old friend of yours, you know the one at the wedding, Tony? I think she might have asked him to dinner.”

“Really?” Tony chuckled. “He’s been a bachelor far too long, it’s about time.”

“It is strange,” Loki murmured after a moment. “When you really think about it. None of us quite had life turn out the way we’d hoped.”

“I was so young when I went home with you,” Peter murmured. “I didn’t know what I wanted, really.”

“I was blinded by anger, and by fear,” Loki replied softly. “I was determined to be something that disgusts me now, determined to become exactly what Odin has expected of me... I really didn’t know what I wanted either, I think.”

“Do you miss how it used to be?” Tony murmured. “The parties, and the nobility, the hunts and the fancy clothes and the servants... there was something comfortable, regular about it all. Something reassuring, and you always knew what to expect.”

“I suppose,” Loki replied. “Yet it feels like another lifetime ago. It feels like a fairy tale. To see the old manor now with patients and nurses and doctors... It feels more real somehow. Somehow I can’t imagine it any other way.”

“Where do we go from here?” Peter asked softly. “You’re still working, traveling, and so are we. Will we even see each other very often?”

“I’ll come home every moment I get,” Loki replied, gently kissing Peter. “I’m sorry I’m away so much. I suppose it just finally feels as though I can do something that truly matters, and it makes me proud. There are so many others out in the world who need help as I once did, and now I can help them in a way no one helped me until you came along, Peter.”

“You’re a hero, truly, you know that?” Peter chuckled. “You mean the world to me.”

“And you to me, darling,” Loki murmured. “You mean the world to me.”

Out their window, the moon sparkled against the ocean. Thor has convinced Quill to bring them to the island where they would spend their honeymoon, out in the Mediterranean off the coast of Greece. Loki said that island held a magic within, and it felt frozen in time as the world rushed on busily around it. Peter hoped it might always be that way, but only the future would be able to tell that.

Tonight, he was content to snuggle beside Loki and think about the past behind them and the future ahead. May had once said that they’d be destined for great things, and he believed that she might be right. But those things could wait. Tonight, he kissed Loki and murmured a soft goodnight before he curled up and let the world rush on as he fell asleep beside the omega he loved nearly as much as life itself. They’d come so far, and he knew there was no turning back.

Chapter End Notes

So we just have the epilogue left... thank you for sticking with this story to the almost end. I've enjoyed reading your comments and seeing you enjoying the story :) It was a joy to write and though I'll miss it all good things must come to a close. I look forward to any comments, I hope you enjoyed this beginning of the end!

To Be Human

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

And anywhere you go, you'll see

People are just like you and me

All the people living in, living in the world today

We're united by our love, we're united by our pain

All the things that I've done and seen

Still, I don't know what it means

To be human

I like to think about how we all look from afar

People driving fancy cars look like beetles to the stars

The missiles and the bombs sound like symphonies gone wrong...

It was the war to end all wars, they said. It was for a noble cause, they said. To fight for King and Country was to do the right thing, they said, and yet the English countryside was haunted by the ghosts of a world blown apart by the nobles' own hand. The healing wards at Friggason Hospital were designed primarily for omegas, but it had become clear that space needed to be made for young alphas who'd lost limbs and spirit, while the psychiatric ward filled up with omegas whose alphas would never return. Peter had worked diligently with them, but he'd felt burned out after his first day.

Steve's letters from the trenches had only filled Peter with greater concern, and he and Bucky had spent many nights pouring out their concerns over whisky by the fire. Loki's letters had been no more encouraging, though they were few and far between. His anger bubbled through words, bitter and resentful of the role he was meant to play.

Loki's work as a spy had taken him from America to Japan to Russia and now to Germany. During the war he played something of a concubine to some official in Germany while his theater troupe performed King Lear in Hamburg, but it was clear that Loki resented sending any information back to England at all. It seemed that the official had too much of a heart, was truly kind, and Loki felt as much sympathy for this enemy as his own people. It was mixed up, confusing, and left Peter aching to hold his lover and reassure him.

Tony had fared little better. His and Peter's inventions had soared beautifully as the new century developed, but during the war they were twisted into ugly things made to destroy. He struggled not to return to the bottle, but instead threw himself into the world of developing new medical technologies for the hospital. He and Peter also traveled frequently to London to visit the school, which became invaluable during the war, turning out bright eyed omegas who filled the jobs of the missing alphas who were away at war.

It had been nothing short of terrible, but, as with all things, the news finally arrived that the war was drawing to a close. It was a crisp day in November when the news arrived. Bruce had been showing Peter how to mix a sleep tonic to help a new omega with terrible insomnia when Shuri burst into the room.

“Heavens, what is it?” Dr Banner spun, grasping at the counter. “Is it another wave of soldiers?”

“No!” Shuri laughed in joy, holding out a telegram from her brother. “Look! The war, they’ve declared it done! Soldiers will be coming home before you know it! They’ve even called the navy back, maybe Thor will come home!”

“Let me see,” Peter snatched it, reading it over before he cried out in joy, hugging Shuri close and nearly dancing around the room with her.

“Blimey,” Bruce murmured. “It’s really done... Has anyone told Tony yet?”

“Probably not, I only just found out,” Shuri explained. “Wanda brought the telegram up right as I was finishing a surgery. Where is Tony, d’you think?”

“He’s working with Stephen on some kind of x-ray machine,” Peter spoke. “It’s supposed to be better for doctors and patients. Come on!”

“Peter,” Bruce rolled his eyes. “We should finish this first.”

“Oh,” Peter flushed. “Sorry, right. Here, lemme just add some of this and we can deliver it to the nurse on the way. Oh! And don’t forget your medicine, Dr Banner! You told me to remind you?”

“Thank you, Peter,” Bruce smiled, throwing back a little vial and swallowing the tonic. Working in a hospital designed primarily for omegas had its downfalls for the alpha, but he’d perfected his tonic from years ago. He’d finally designed a medicine that kept alphas from being affected by an omega’s heat, and he took it religiously.

Their walk through the refurbished halls of what used to be Odin Manor was quick. The third floor had been almost entirely redesigned to house the psychiatric ward, though this floor had been left carpeted. Somehow it felt more homey now than when Peter had lived in the floor years ago. Loki had been meticulous about designing the floor based on his own experiences with Thanos; he’d taken every step to make it as dissimilar from his own experiences as possible.

The nurse at the front thanked them for the medicine, and then the group dashed up the steps to the attic where Tony had created his lab. They heard bickering the moment they got halfway up the stairs, and Peter chuckled softly, bounding up the stairs.

“I really don’t think this is the best decision,” Tony was saying, pacing around the machine in the middle of the room.

“Because of the equalization of the electronic waves? Yes, I’d be inclined to agree. So then tell me why, Stark, we can’t simply use this-“

“Because that isn’t the point!”

Peter cleared his throat, and the two spun to face him, Tony flushing slightly as he cleared his throat.

“Hey there,” he smiled not quite sheepishly. “We’re kind of busy...”

“So you don’t want me to tell you how the war is over?” Peter questioned. There was a long pause, before Tony’s face lit up and he dashed over.

“You’re kidding right? It’s over?” Tony cried. When Peter nodded, the alpha pulled him into a bone crushing hug, and Peter laughed, hugging him back.

“Yeah,” Peter chuckled softly. “It’s over. Shuri just got a telegram from her brother. He’s going to join the peace talks with the American president to try and sort out the details, but the fighting is done. It’s over.”

Tony whooped softly, hugging Peter once more before he turned to hug Bruce as well, who chuckled and gently pushed him away.

“I reckon this means Loki will be coming home soon, too,” he smiled. “You know that, right?”

“Jesus... You’re right,” Tony’s jaw dropped. “You’re right! He’s coming home... Peter, he’ll be coming home!”

Peter laughed softly, nodding as he tucked an arm around Tony for one more hug, smiling practically from ear to ear.

“It’s been two years since he last left,” Peter murmured. “Two years, can you imagine? It feels like an eternity.”

“More than an eternity,” Tony nodded. “England is a new country, a new place. I’ll bet he won’t even recognize it. Do you think he knows omegas got the vote?”

“Tony, he’s not that distanced,” Peter laughed softly. “But I’ll bet he’s surprised by the development, and the autos! Remember when he used to hate autos? Now they’re all over!”

“We should have a celebration!” Tony declared. “For the patients who can handle one. We’ll order food and have a band come in... we could even have a picnic in the front garden for anyone who can go out.”

“I’ll organize it,” Shuri declared.

“I’ll help,” Bruce agreed.

“What’s this I hear about a celebration?”

A soft creak on the stairs caught everyone’s attention, and when they turned, Peter felt something close to a sob bubble up out of his throat.

“Hello darling,” the figure on the stairs smiled. “Did you miss me?”

“You’re home,” Peter whispered, hesitating for only a moment before he dashed up to Loki, pressing a deep kiss to his lips as Loki laughed, holding him close.

“Bucky picked me up at the train station this morning. I’ve been on my way home for some time now, but I didn’t want to tell you. I wanted it to be a surprise,” Loki smiled, pressing a kiss to his temple before he stepped into the room, smiling warmly at Tony.

“Oh, darling,” Tony murmured, frozen to the spot until Loki pulled the alpha into his arms, kissing him just as deeply.

“I’ve missed you so much,” Loki murmured to him. “Every time I fell asleep next to Friedrich I

wished it were you or Peter. He was a sweet man, I have to admit it. I think I broke his heart when I left, but my heart wasn't whole until I stepped foot here in England. Oh, darlings, I've missed you so much..."

He pressed kisses to both their cheeks again, and Peter absolutely glowed, squeezing Loki's hand in his own.

"Well," Loki murmured, looking around. "I must say I like what you've done with the place. It almost doesn't look like the prison where I spent my late teenage years."

"Oh, thanks," Tony flushed, looking around the attic. "I'm afraid I have sort of taken over."

"And that's why I like it," Loki replied gently. "I heard we're planning a party? Steve won't be home for another week at least, but sure he and Bucky will be having their own celebrations when the time comes. Come, I've spent too much of the past two years indoors, I need some good fresh air."

"We'll see you in a bit, I'm sure," Bruce smiled, squeezing Tony's shoulder. "You two have fun."

"Don't finish without me," Tony looked back to Stephen, who shrugged and winked.

"No promises," he replied, though he set down the equipment he'd been working on.

Their walk down through the house was odd. Besides the comfy, homeliness of Loki's psychiatric ward, the house had been turned sterile and clean with all the new practices recommended by the best nurses and physicians. Most of the house was hardly recognizable as the manor of old, but it made Loki beam with pride when he thought of how many individuals were being helped even now. It gave the house life, rather than sitting empty and unused as it had the last years of Odin's life. Loki smiled at the portrait of his mother hanging in the front hall, sending her a silent prayer as he led his lover out into the crisp autumn air.

"So how was it? Are you alright? We've missed you terribly!" Peter declared as they wandered towards the sprawling rose gardens, but Loki tutted and pressed a gentle finger to Peter's lips.

"I'd rather not dwell on the past," Loki spoke. "But instead look to the future. We lost two years of each other, but what happened during those years doesn't truly matter. I've told you what I needed to in my letters, and I'd rather not discuss the past further."

"Fine then," Peter replied. "If you're so eager to talk about the future, then why don't you go on ahead? We're listening. I suppose you don't want to hear about our plans for a world's fair, or about how I've become a certified nurse, or about Tony's inventions in the medical world..."

"Alright, alright," Loki chuckled softly. "I see your point, we have a lot to discuss, but I have something really pressing that I need to tell you both."

"What's that?" Tony asked, pulling the two to sit at a bench across from a cherub fountain.

"I've resigned," Loki murmured. "I'm no longer going to be a spy."

"Resigned?" Peter blinked. "But Loki, I thought you loved your work. I know it's been two years, but don't feel like you can't pursue work just because of us."

"It's not just because of you," Loki sighed softly. "For the past two years I've watched the empires of Europe crumble from what they used to be. I watched good alphas be killed over the squabbles of nobles, I've passed information that's resulted in more deaths than I can probably count. I don't

want to do this anymore, I can't. I've spoken with Clint and Natasha; they say I can continue acting if I like, but I don't need to be a spy any longer if I don't want to. I've done that life, and I'm ready for something new."

"Loki," Tony murmured. "Are you sure? I know you've gotten to travel the world with this job, to do things you dreamed of as a child."

"I'm sure," Loki promised, squeezing his hand. "I've done all of that, and I suppose I enjoyed it, but at the same time I've been incredibly lonely. When I was small, I dreamed of growing up and marrying you, Tony. I dreamed of settling down, leading an ordinary and perhaps boring life with you, and then everything happened to throw a cog in the wheel."

"Sorry," Peter grinned. "But I do enjoy mussing with well laid plans."

"Anyway," Loki smirked at Peter. "I'm ready to settle down. You're a nurse now, eh? Why not a doctor?"

"Because I didn't want to be," Peter replied. "And that's a good enough answer for anyone."

"Good on you," Loki ruffled his hair. "You've always done what you thought best, no care for anyone else. It's a good thing."

"When you say it like that I'm not so sure," Peter chuckled, gently pushing Loki. "Anyway, I'm too busy working with Bruce to make new medicine, and working with Tony on new machines for the hospital and for our fair, and helping to run the school you dumped in my lap when you took off. Do you know how hard it is to run a school? It's exhausting!"

"Sorry," Loki chuckled. "You sound like you've been awfully busy."

"You don't know the half of it," Peter glared playfully. "But I've managed, and I've been happy, but I have missed you."

"And now you won't anymore," Loki replied gently. "I'm coming home to stay this time."

"England isn't what it used to be," Tony murmured, pushing a bit of hair from Loki's eyes. "It isn't the country you remember. Times have changed so fast. Can you imagine that not so very long ago we were still ruled by lords and ladies? Somehow I sense that the king and queen are becoming obsolete, little by little. Half the manors in England are either in ruins or something else, just like your hospital. Everything has changed. It isn't the home you remember."

"But it's the home I want," Loki replied softly.

"Exactly," Peter broke into a smile. "What do you think your group was fighting for, all those years ago?" Peter chuckled, squeezing Tony's hand. "This is the world you and I have helped to create, this is the world we dreamed of. Did I write to you that I've been working with my old training school? Their enrollment numbers were dropping, and when I agreed to come in and refurbish their curriculum, they agreed! You know they don't even get sold after it's all through anymore?"

Loki snorted softly, muttering, "Lovely."

"No, really, it is!" Peter chuckled. "It is lovely. Loki, I know you never really understood what it was like for omegas like me, but being sold was an honor, really. When I went in to speak with the students, half of them were scared out of their heads. They asked me what they were to do after graduation. They didn't know where to go or how to survive, and you know what I told them? I

told them that they had their whole lives to explore, that they could get married if they liked, or they could go find jobs if they liked that! I've also been working with a gentlemen in London. He finds jobs for omegas, real jobs in offices, and hospitals, and schools... I gave his reference to the students so that they might be less afraid of the world outside their walls. You have to remember, I too thought that the only life worth living is one where you're mated to a rich alpha. A lot of the world still thinks that way, but a lot of the world doesn't, and that's progress."

"It's progress you've created," Loki pointed out. "And I'll bet more than half of England doesn't even know your name."

"And the whole world knows Tony's, I know," Peter rolled his eyes. "But that isn't the point. It makes me happy to help whether or not I get recognition, you know? I care much more about results."

"And that's why I love you," Loki pressed a kiss to the top of his head. "You never change, Peter, you're always perfect."

Peter chuckled again, rolling his eyes, though he looked between Loki and Tony as he murmured, "So what next? Half the world is in ruins, and it feels like we're needed everywhere, but it's been so long since it's been just us three. I know we all have duties, and I plan to follow them, but don't you think perhaps we could take some time for just us three?"

"Indeed," Loki smiled. "And that's why I've booked us tickets."

"Tickets?" Tony blinked. "To where?"

"Well I booked the tickets figuratively with a certain motley crew who can take us to that little island in Greece where we had our honeymoon," Loki smiled. "I hear the war didn't touch it, and it's changed very little. I thought we could take just a little time to visit it again. Thor is on his way home, I heard from Captain Quill this morning."

"Really?" Peter's face lit up.

"His ship docks tomorrow," Loki nodded. "And Quill got a telegram from him saying that he wants to join the little crew again. Of course Quill and Gamora have their hands sort of full what with the twins and all, and Groot is still in school, but Rocket, Drax, Mantis agreed to work the ship with Thor and bring us down to the Mediterranean for a good long trip, once we're ready. Can you imagine? I haven't seen my brother in years now? It feels like ages as much as it feels like yesterday. I know we probably have all sorts of things to sort out before we leave, but I wanted to tell you now."

"Well," Tony laughed softly. "Today is full of surprises, isn't it?"

"It always is with Loki around," Peter chuckled softly, leaning up to press a kiss to Loki's jaw, and the other omega beamed, holding Peter close.

"You know," Peter spoke. "It's hard to imagine what life was like before the war, even though I do remember it."

"Like I said," Tony spoke up. "The world has changed so much it's hard to know which way is up."

"But this world feels more real, you know?" Peter went on. "It's like we were living in some odd sort of dream before, and now we've found the real world."

“It’s funny,” Tony agreed. “But sometimes I miss the way it used to be.”

“I’m sure a lot of people do,” Peter replied. “Things were simpler then, sure, but like I said, it wasn’t real. And life wasn’t simpler for everyone. I mean yes your place in the world was certainly clear, but that didn’t make it easy.”

“Life has never been easy,” Loki chimed in.

“You like just to complain,” Peter giggled, laughing when Loki glared.

“You know,” Tony murmured. “Right at this moment it feels like maybe nothing changed. I mean here we are sitting in the Odin family rose garden, staring at a fountain, just existing together. We could pretend it was years ago, we could pretend that we settled down together in a cottage, that Loki never left, and that everything was simple, easy.”

“I suppose,” Peter relies softly. “But that would be ignoring all the great things we’ve done.”

“Look,” Loki whispered, pointing to a bird sitting atop the cherub in the fountain. It was taking a bath, but it stopped halfway through to sing a little song. Another bird, perhaps its partner, swooped overhead, and the two chirped at each other before they took off, soaring beside each other high above the garden.

“You know,” Loki smiled, wrapping his arms around Peter’s and Tony’s shoulders. “When I see little birds like that, it makes me feel sort of free.”

“I know,” Peter agreed. “They look so happy, like they could be dancing.”

Loki turned to kiss first Peter’s, and then Tony’s cheeks, the kiss warm and solid after so much time spent apart. Tony allowed his head to fall against Loki’s shoulder, and he let out a happy sigh, closing his eyes.

“So,” Loki hummed. “This is what it’s like to be fully and truly happy. I think I like it.”

“It feels sort of safe, doesn’t it?” Peter smiled. “I’m sure the world has more than a few nasty surprises in place for us, but together I feel like we could face anything. Things will change, that’s a given, but we don’t have to. We know who we are, and we’re going to help the world for the better just like we always have. That’s one thing that will never change.”

“Never,” Loki agreed.

“Never,” Tony nodded, kissing Loki once more.

And so, indeed, on a crisp day in autumn, they made their promises. England was no longer a place of lords, ladies, and ballroom dancing. Nearly everything had changed, but then that’s hardly a surprise. Peter had known since he was a child that happiness wasn’t simply given, it was created, invented, and he knew he was one of the best inventors of the new century. And so he didn’t worry about what else would change in the coming years. He knew he’d always find a way to fix it and make it right. Peter’s schooling so many years ago had been rigorous, but it hadn’t taught him the keys to life. He’d found those on his own through the people he loved, and he was never letting them go.

Finally, the final end! This fic was super long and fun to write but I'm also happy for this final closure. Thank you so much to my loyal readers, you know who you are, I really hope you enjoyed!

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!